

OVERCOMING THE BARRIERS TO A SUCCESSFUL HOME-SCHOOL LINK

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It's great when you are able to set up a good home-school link but what do you do when you encounter barriers? How do you deal with them? In this article, we look at four potential problems and their solutions.



If you communicate bad news about progress more often than good news, parents are less likely to work with you to help their child and will feel less able to help their child.

Personalised positive telephone feedback improves home-school communication.

If you do have bad news to convey, try to sandwich it between some positive feedback. If there is a real problem, set up a separate dialogue.

Parental involvement does lead to improved results. You can get parents more involved by sharing the syllabus with them and ensuring that they understand how it works. They will be more likely to get involved with their child's education and help, if they understand what their child is learning and why. Make sure you demonstrate to parents how they can help their child.

It's important that teachers and parents work together towards a common goal. Work together directly and avoid using the child as a messenger.

Potential Problem No: 1

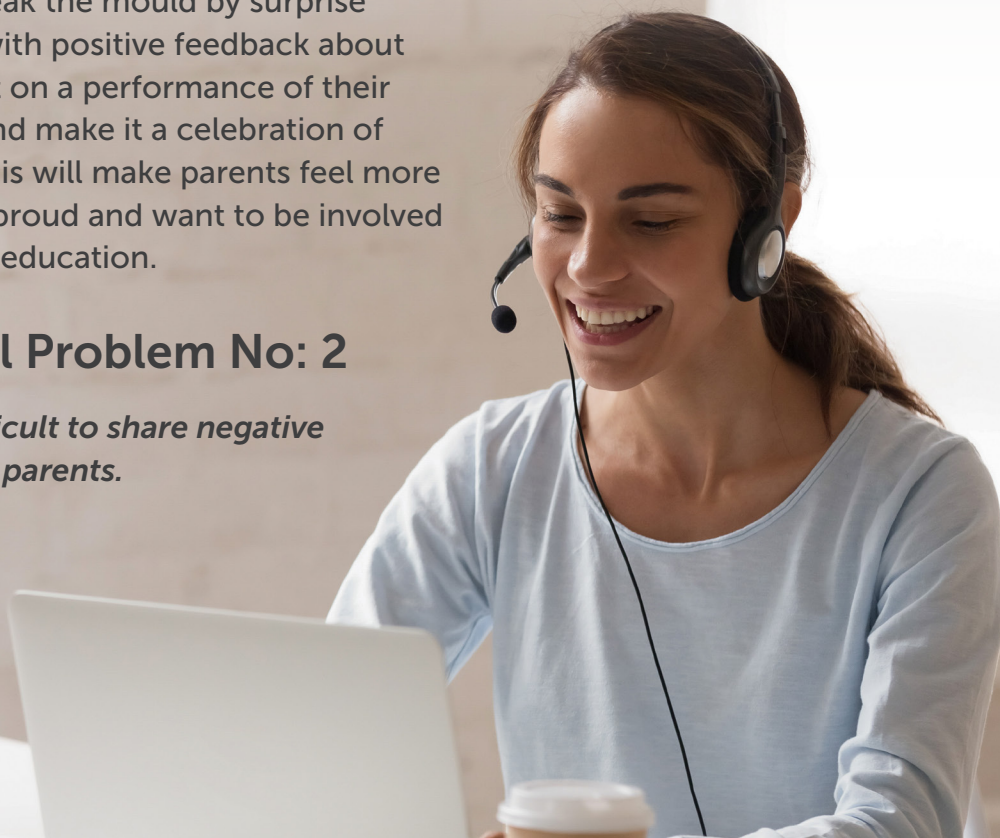
Preconceptions. Either parents have preconceptions about their role and their relationship to you, or you judge parents based on their child's behaviour and appearance.

Make sure you give parents a chance. Don't judge them based on their child. Invite them to the school or talk to them directly without the child present so that you can get a feeling for who they are as an individual.

If you are feeling judged by parents, it's important you break their preconceptions about you. Break the mould by surprise calling them with positive feedback about their child, put on a performance of their child's work and make it a celebration of every child. This will make parents feel more involved, feel proud and want to be involved in their child's education.

Potential Problem No: 2

You find it difficult to share negative feedback with parents.



Potential Problem No: 3

Some parents never respond to your communication.

It can be very frustrating when your communication is not acknowledged by parents, but keep your cool and follow these simple steps.

- Review the messages you have sent. Are your messages too long? Maybe parents do not have time to read them properly?
- Explain to parents directly what you are trying to achieve. Tell them about the benefits of a good home-school link. Ask them if they have any concerns. If they do, you may need to moderate your expectations.
- Persevere. Perseverance shows your commitment to the parents and child. Try to make sure each message is different and not simply routine.

Potential Problem No: 4

Whilst parents blame you for problems, you in turn blame them. And you expect one another to fix the problems!

Whatever happens, do not blame parents for their child's lack of progress or bad behaviour. Blaming them will only alienate them from you.

Try to get parents on your side by introducing yourself as soon as you learn their child will be in your class. Keep up positive contact with them and give them opportunities to be involved in their child's learning and school activities. This way you are more likely to build a positive relationship with them, and they are more likely to communicate with you when there is a problem at home.

If you feel you are being blamed by parents, please don't take things personally. Remain diplomatic and professional. If you are meeting a parent and are nervous, why not invite a colleague to the meeting for moral support. At the same time, make sure the parent does not feel they are being ganged up on.



Further resources

Read the rest of Macmillan's Home-School Link articles at [macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners](https://www.macmillanenglish.com/blog-resources/teacher-resources/young-learners) and watch the short videos on YouTube (Macmillan Education ELT) – look for the playlist called [Macmillan's Home-School Link for young learners](https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL12345678901234567890)

This article originally appeared as part of Macmillan's Home-School Link series by Aimee Bates.