



Communicating with Families: Every Minute Counts

Parents/guardians often mistakenly believe that students can miss a day of school (or two or three...) and it won't make much of a difference. This is especially true of kindergarten/elementary students.

We, as educators, know that every minute does count – especially with our youngest students, who are gaining the educational, social and emotional skills that will be the foundation for their ultimate success.

When educators start talking about the skills that students gain each day in the classroom we begin to show parents that:

Every day their child comes to school, they will learn something of value.

Every day their child comes to school, they are building the foundation for their future academic success.

Here are some tips and ideas on how to send these two critical messages home to families:

- At the end of each day, help students identify at least one concrete thing they learned that they can share with their families.
- Consider establishing a weekly classroom newsletter or email to share with families at least one valuable piece of information from each day, talking about this in the context of *“This week we learned....next year, your child will continue to learn....”*
- Encourage parents to attend back to school night and parent teacher conferences so that they can see the classroom.
- Incorporate simple, project-based homework into your lesson plans to involve parents in supporting their child's learning.
- Parents may think the day before a vacation or long weekend is a “fun day” and that true learning does not occur. Consider telling them in advance what your students will be learning on that day.