

# TEACHERS AND PARENTS: A PARTNERSHIP

Often as administrators, we hear: “If only the parents would . . .” and “If only the teachers would. . .” These are unfortunate comments that develop when the roles of teacher and parent are misunderstood.

Our job as Sunday school teachers is to support the parents in their job of spiritually educating their children. Some families teach spiritual truths; however, others are ill-equipped to do so.

Obviously, we see only a portion of the children’s lives. It is crucial that we stand in partnership with the parent, not in criticism or competition. A great deal can be done to help parents in their task.

## **Communicate**

If the child’s parent(s) drops him off and picks him up, be sure to introduce yourself. Let the parents know you are glad their child is in your class. Show interest in family concerns, but don’t believe everything the child tells you about his family life! You’d be surprised what the parents hear about your Sunday school class!

Let the parents know what their child is studying, and how the parents can reinforce the lessons. The curriculum provides a “letter to parents” on which you can easily drop a quick note. Look for opportunities to share ideas with parents who are open to receiving them.

Phone calls or notes to absentees let parents know the importance of bringing their child on a regular basis, and can also give you insights on their home situations. Home visits are a powerful “I care about you” statement from teachers. A team of children’s teachers visit weekly; see Cindy if you would like to join them.

If a child in your class has special needs, the situation can accelerate to the point where you need help from the parent. Rather than calling and saying, in essence, “Your child is a brat!” approach the parent with concern that you seem unable to adequately meet his needs and “would [the parent] have any suggestions for you?” This also tells the child that his parents and his teacher are “in cahoots,” and in itself can provide more accountability for good behavior. It may be the child is being “helped” at home with the same areas of needed growth, and you can reinforce what the parent or school is already attempting.