

## Sharing Rules with Families

(Summarized by TATS from IRIS Center, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University)

Once teachers have established classroom rules, they should communicate those rules to the families. One common way to do this is for the teacher to send home a letter informing families about the classroom rules. By communicating and informing families of the rules, teachers can:

- Inform families of the expected school behaviors
- Promote consistency between home and school
- Lay the foundation to establish positive relationships



### **Research Shows:**

Positive relationships between teachers and families help create a supportive context, which allows teachers to address the challenging behaviors of children should they arise. (*Fettig & Ostrosky, 2011*)

Communicating and informing families about classroom rules can open an important dialogue about developmentally appropriate behavior expectations for young children and effective ways to encourage young children to follow the rules. This is an important step in establishing a mutual understanding between parents and teachers about the rules. Further, this dialogue allows opportunities to discuss similarities and differences between home and school rules. This allows teachers and families to be as consistent as possible and to work together to help children navigate the expectations of the different environments.

Communication with families should occur regularly throughout the year. To foster positive relationships with families, teachers can share information about children's successes, including how they follow the rules.

Teachers can also invite families to class celebrations when the class has earned a reward, or encourage family members to acknowledge the children's successful school behavior. When teachers have positive relationships with families, it can be easier to engage in discussions when children are having difficulty following the rules.

Teachers can also encourage their children's families to establish household rules. When helping families establish rules, teachers can discuss guidelines for creating and teaching them (e.g., five or fewer rules, rules should be positively stated), the importance of reviewing and practicing them, and the value of positive feedback instead of criticism or punishment.

Reference: *ML Hemmeter, Professor, Special Education*  
*IRIS Center, Peabody College, Vanderbilt University*