



# Building Effective School Partnerships

Family Mentor Program

*Created by: Amanda Dimilta, York Coach*

*last updated: March 2016*



Children's  
Treatment Network

Generously funded by:



# What is school advocacy?

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To advocate for a child in the education system is to speak on behalf of the child and promote their specific learning needs.



# Why do we need to learn how to effectively communicate with a school?



## TO MANAGE EMOTIONS

Maintaining a level of professionalism – balanced with assertiveness when needed – can be tricky, especially when emotions are running high.



## TO INCREASE YOUR CONFIDENCE

You know your child best, and when you communicate effectively, you will be a valued player in your child's education.



## TO BECOME PART OF THE TEAM

Learning to collaborate with your child's educators and truly become a member of your child's team will create the foundation for learning and for achieving goals.



## TO SET AN EXAMPLE

Your positive relationship with the school will demonstrate to your child how important it is to ask for what they need to be successful.

# First steps to communication

At the beginning of the school year (or earlier), ask your child's teacher, "What is the best way to communicate with you?"



Ask what form of daily written communication (journal, agenda, etc) will work best for them.








Keep in contact regularly and ask specific questions. Maintain an open dialogue to minimize surprises when challenges arise.









Request a meeting or phone call with the teacher to discuss important items (changes in your child's life, successes, challenges, etc.)











Hi Mom and Dad!








I had a    day at school today.

We had      

For lunch I ate:

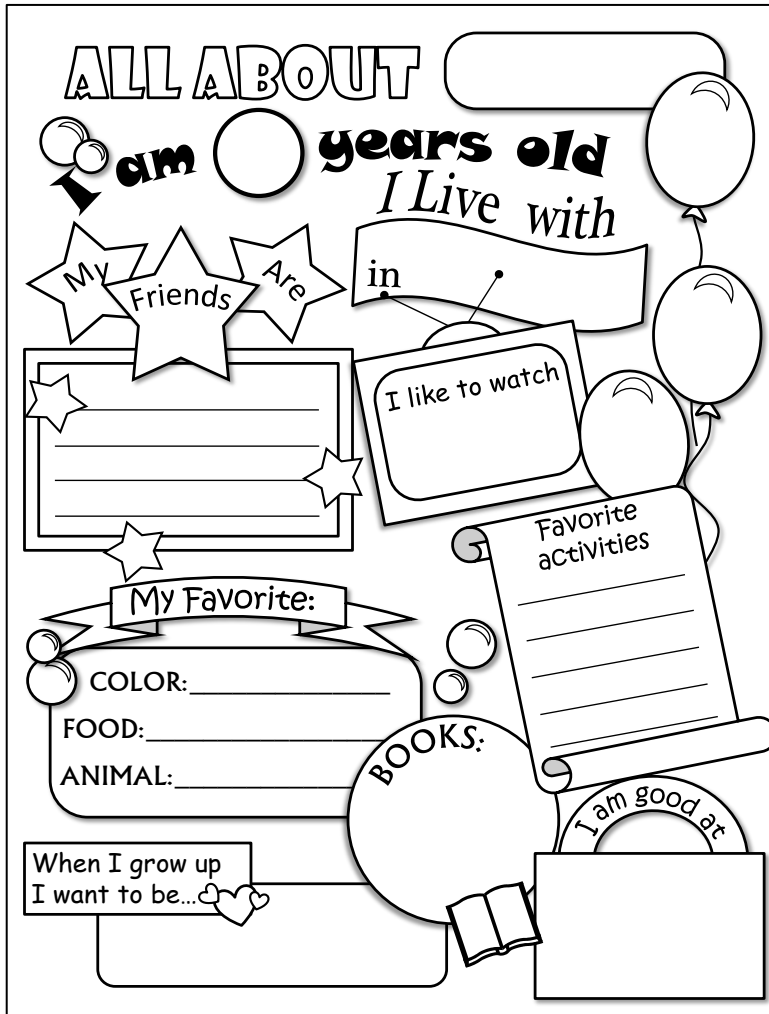
|   |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

I worked on:

|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |  |  |
|--|--|--|--|--|

Other Comments:

# “All About Me” portfolios



**ALL ABOUT** \_\_\_\_\_

I am \_\_\_\_\_ years old

I Live with \_\_\_\_\_

My Friends Are \_\_\_\_\_

I like to watch \_\_\_\_\_

Favorite activities \_\_\_\_\_

My Favorite:

COLOR: \_\_\_\_\_

FOOD: \_\_\_\_\_

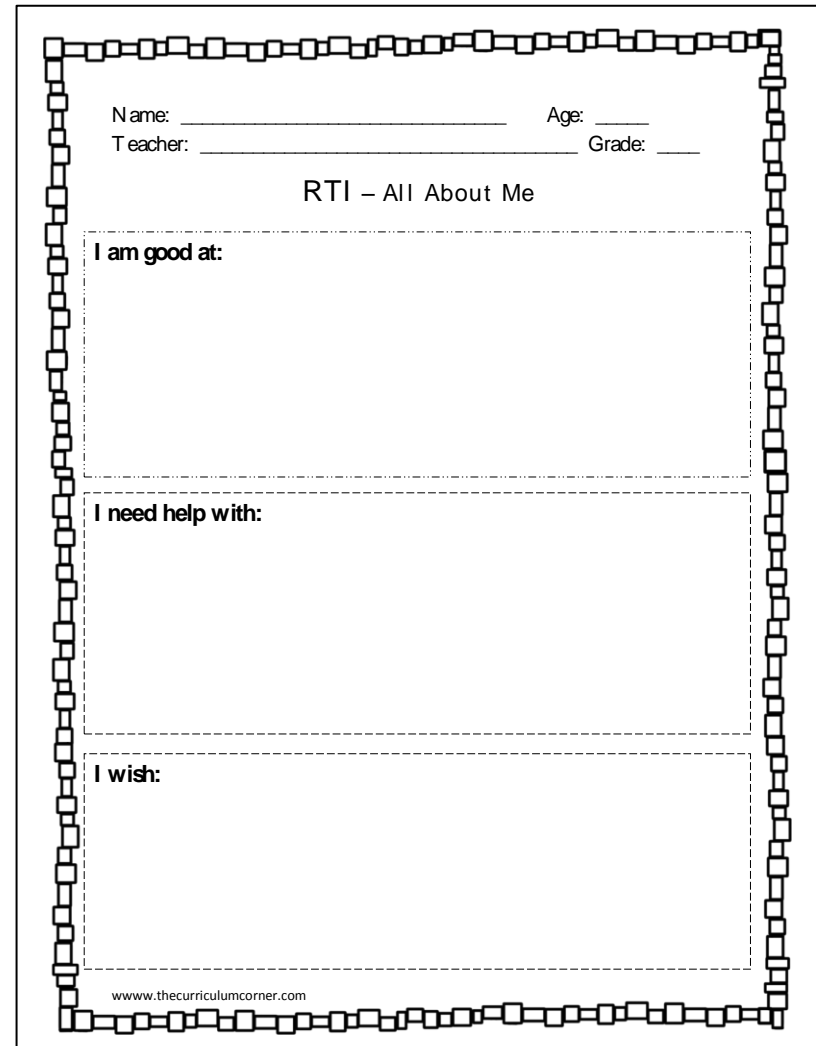
ANIMAL: \_\_\_\_\_

BOOKS: \_\_\_\_\_

I am good at \_\_\_\_\_

When I grow up I want to be... \_\_\_\_\_

The Files of Mrs. E.



Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

RTI – All About Me

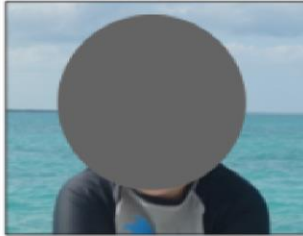
I am good at:

I need help with:

I wish:

www.thecurriculumcorner.com

The Curriculum Corner



Hi, I'm [redacted].

I learn a bit differently from other kids,  
and if you know these things about me  
then you can help me learn better. *Thanks!*

### What I'm **good** at ...

Creative stories  
to express ideas



Details when  
drawing



Friendly, and cares  
for animals



### What I **struggle** with ...

Loud  
noise



Competitive  
situations



Time  
management



### What **helps** me ...

Step-by-step  
instructions



Predictable  
routine



Positive  
reinforcement



### What **slows** me down ...

Sarcasm &  
figurative speech



Having to show  
proof



Repetitive &  
lengthy tasks



*For more details about me, please read my IEP*



I've always believed that if you want to ensure that you'll have credibility when you call out things that are going **wrong**, the best thing that you can do is to actively point out when things are going **right**.

Take time to listen carefully.

Show compassion, sensitivity and respect. Recognize the benefits of each other's expertise and knowledge.

Collaborate with each other as partners in planning and decision-making. Approach disagreements in a manner that encourages mutual problem-solving.

Develop a mutual understanding of the child's strengths and needs. Trust each other's judgment; ask questions, express opinions and give suggestions.

Clarify what is needed to have the child be successful.



Lynn Ziraldo, LDA York Region



# Successful meetings

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Focus on the best interests of the child.

Understand each other's perceptions of the child's strengths and needs (which may differ between school and home).

Work to achieve an understanding of each other's points of view.

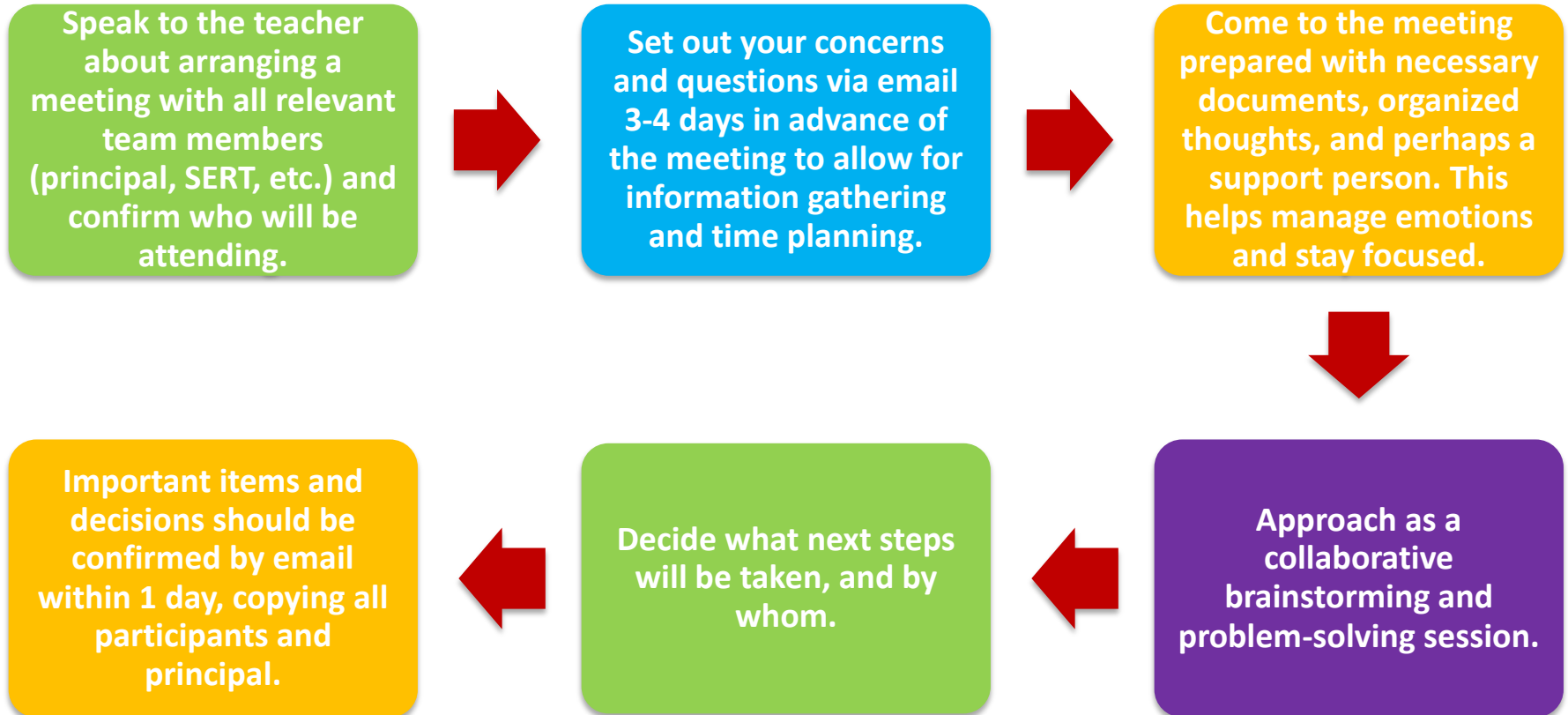
Determine ways to share responsibilities.

Openly express appreciation for participation in the meeting.

Focus on determining a positive course of action (rather than on assigning blame).

Lynn Ziraldo, LDA York Region

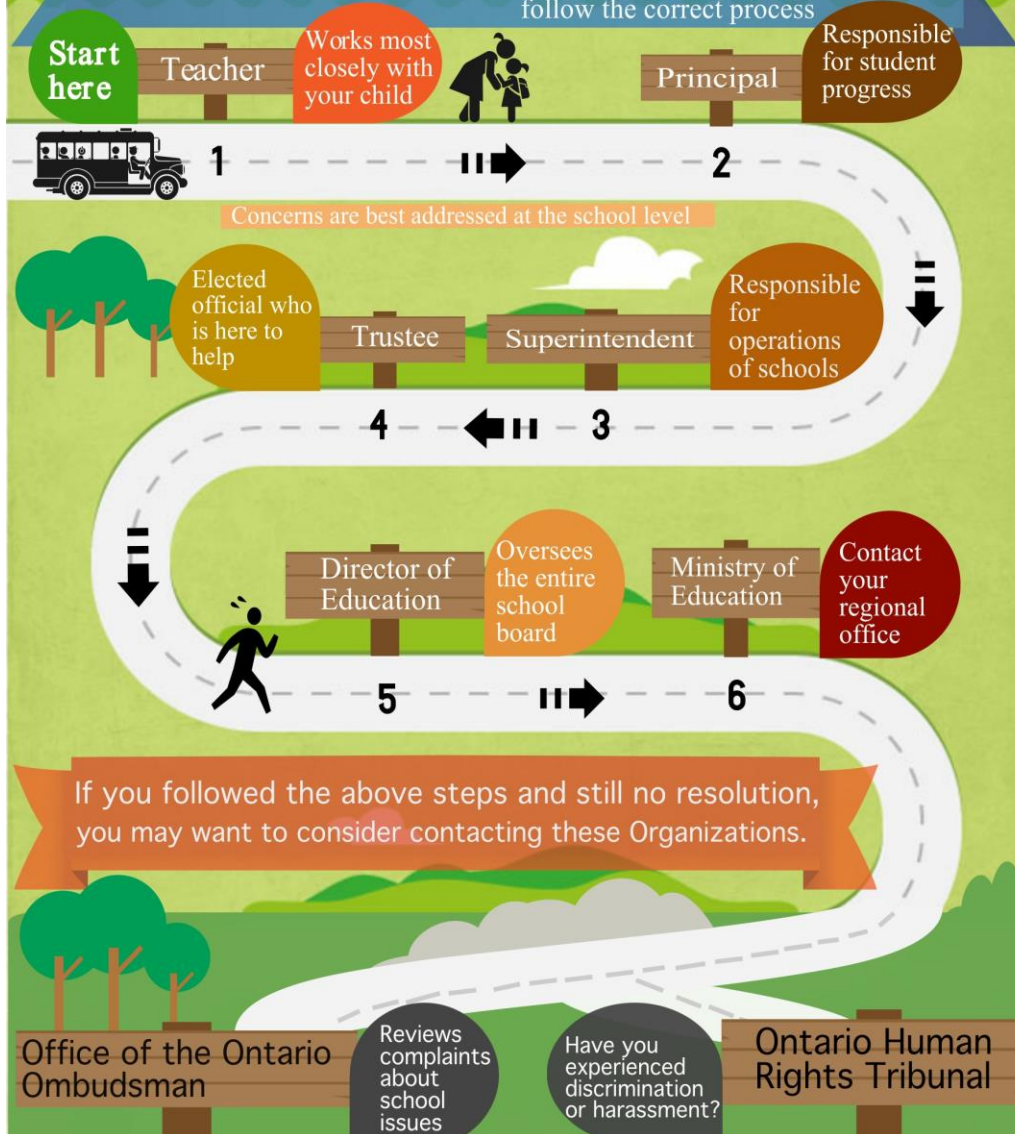
# When you need to involve more team members...



# Advocacy

Created for Easter Seals Kids at School  
www.education.easterseals.org  
by: S Caldwell

## How to deal with concerns at school follow the correct process



Sherry Caldwell, CTN Volunteer Mentor  
Created for Easter Seals

1. Participate in your school community.
2. Actively point out the positive.
3. Ask specific questions.
4. Avoid super-long emails, and follow the “24h rule”.
5. Set a good example to your child.
6. Choose your battles.

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- ❑ CTN's Online Resource Centre [All About School and Individual Education Plans](#)
  - ❑ [Advocating for Your Child at School](#), Children's Support Solutions
  - ❑ [Kids At School](#), Easter Seals
  - ❑ [Building a Positive Parent-Teacher Relationship](#), Lynn Ziraldo, LDA York Region
  - ❑ [Shared Solutions](#), A Guide to Preventing and Resolving Conflicts Regarding Programs and Services for Students with Special Education Needs, Ministry of Education
  - ❑ [Learning As We Grow: Enriching Education for Students with Autism and Other Neurodevelopmental Disorders](#), Nicole Beurkens
  - ❑ [Lost at School: Why Our Kids with Behavioral Challenges are Falling Through the Cracks and How We Can Help Them](#), Dr. Ross Greene
  - ❑ Participate in advocacy workshops, such as those hosted by our partners at [Kerry's Place](#).

# Special Education – Quick links

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Simcoe County:

Public – [Simcoe County District School Board](#)

Catholic – [Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board](#)

French public – [Conseil scolaire Viamonde](#)

French Catholic – [Conseil scolaire de district catholique Centre-Sud](#)

Protestant – [Protestant Separate School Board](#)

York Region:

Public - [York Region District School Board](#)

Catholic - [York Catholic District School Board](#)

French public – [Conseil scolaire Viamonde](#)

See also the Ministry guidelines with respect to [Private Schools](#) and [Home Schools](#) in Ontario.

*“I am not satisfied with how my daughter is being supported at school, but I don’t want to bother the teacher.”*





*“My child’s teacher and I disagree on the best mode of communicating with each other. What do I do?”*



***“We had a team meeting with the Special Education Resource Teacher (SERT) and principal, but I’m not satisfied with the outcome. What next?”***



*“The teacher keeps telling me I worry too much, but I just want to share some tips and suggestions. What do I do?”*

