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| **Start a newsletter** | Start a monthly class newsletter. You can personalize this by selecting a student to design the newsletter and be “artist of the month;” featuring an “academic star” and a “class citizen” of the week; and including student and family contributions. Newsletters may be sent home on paper, digitally, or both  The newsletter is a way to inform families about upcoming events, activities, and deadlines. It may also include tips about learning at home and ways families can get involved in student learning. Keep the tone positive and encourage two-way communication by including “family opinion” questions and posting results in the next newsletter. |
| **Greet families as they drop off or pick up their child** | Communicating with parents informally helps build authentic relationships and can increase a family’s comfort with communication. It also reinforces the idea that parents and teachers know each other and are working together for the benefit of students. This is not a good time to discuss problems, but can be an opportunity to set an appointment. |
| **Call families early in the year, and once a quarter after that** | A positive phone will start the year on the right note and build a foundation for future dialogue. Subsequent calls acknowledging a student’s work or effort, thanking a parent for helping with a project, or personally inviting them to an event will increase parents’ comfort in communicating with you. |
| **Create a Family Communication Bulletin Board** | Create a family bulletin board outside your classroom to notify parents of upcoming events, display pictures from special occasions, and offer suggestions for current standards-based home-learning activities that parents and children can do together. |
| **Send home Weekly Work Folder with a pocket for response** | Weekly Work Folders containing completed homework, in-class work, and any quizzes should be sent home with students each Friday. Staple a blank sheet to the inside cover of the folder so that you can write a quick message to parents, and allow space for them to respond. |
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| **Create a Parent- Feedback form** | Feedback forms can assist families in monitoring their involvement in important areas, such as praising their children, getting children to school on time, helping with homework, volunteering in the classroom, etc. These forms are also a good way to provide parents with additional ways they can get involved in their child’s learning. |
| **Send positive notes home with students** | A quick note suggesting specific, standard based ideas for home learning activities can help families feel more comfortable supporting student learning. Mark a parent response portion of each note to encourage two-way communication; ask parents to comment, ask questions about material, or answer a question. |
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**Quick Ideas to Encourage Two-Way Communication**