

# Good Update Letters....

- **Short, simple, and easy to navigate.** *Limit your letters to 1-2 pages. Early childhood and elementary teachers even break their letters down by subject area. This provides families with the most important information without drowning them in pages of detail about the week's lessons and progress.*
- **Focused on academics.** *Even early childhood letters focus on what kids were learning in school, not class parties, asking parents for donations, or reminders about community events and programs. While it's fine to include relevant information about events or programming not directly tied to the academic program, this information should take a back seat to what kids are learning and doing every day.*
- **Positive, warm, and affirming.** *Maintain a positive and upbeat tone. Tell parents how much you appreciate their engagement and how much it matters. If parents know you appreciate that they read the update and talk about learning with their child, they are much more likely to do so.*
- **Defines and explains key terms and concepts.** *Define key terms, i.e. "complete sentences have the following characteristics." Clear specific definitions make academic jargon understandable to families so they can discuss these concepts with confidence at home. Sharing additional websites or resources can help families who need and/or want more information about a particular subject.*
- **Includes information about upcoming, as well as current, projects.** *Remind parents of upcoming deadlines and provide details on future projects. This gives parents a chance to monitor their child's performance and to prepare for projects that may take additional time and/or support to complete.*
- **Invites parent feedback and follow-up.** *Invite parents to share their thoughts, concerns, or suggestions with you. Ask parents to write a few sentences in response to the update. Personally call a few families each week to ensure they are getting the updates and to get their perspective on how they are using the information.*