

STRATEGY 2: PARTNERED COMMUNICATIONS

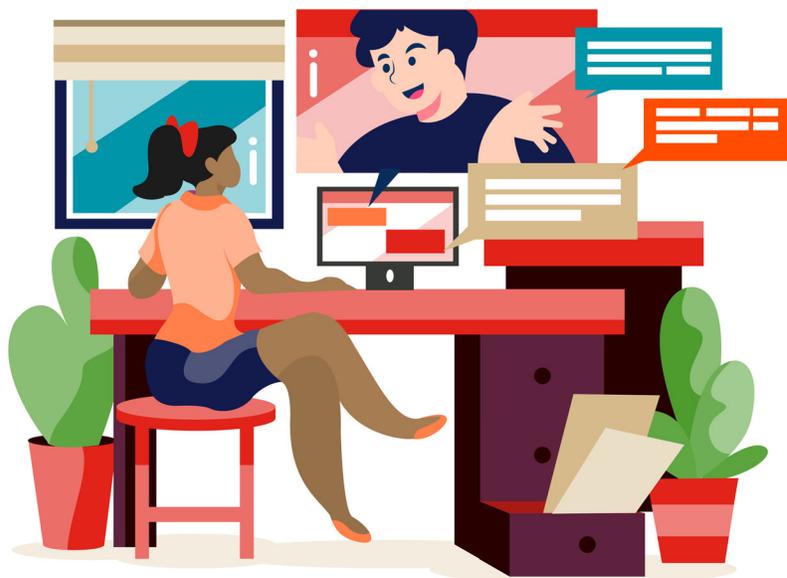
Pairing up for your beginning of the year relationship building can provide value to both the family and you! There are many reasons to partner up, such as:

1. A family might already have a strong relationship with another staff member. A familiar voice or face on the initial call can work to establish trust.
2. You have a co-teacher or aide with whom the family should also have a relationship.
3. The student receives additional supports or services at the school, such as through an IEP, so it makes sense to include the Special Education or ELL teacher.

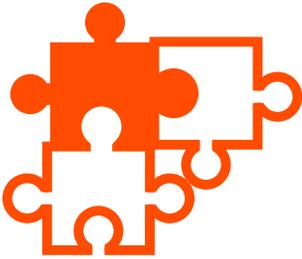
No matter the reason, employing this strategy can benefit everyone involved – especially the student and family! In the Appendix, you'll find example [Questions for Trust Building](#) to use in Partnered Communications.

School Leader Move

This strategy requires sharing information across your school. You and your leadership team should think through the systems and structures teachers need to coordinate these conversations.

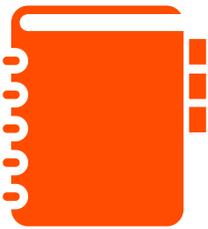


Tips for Getting Started



Pick the right partner.

It may be a special educator or ELL teacher. Other potential options for a great Partnered Communication include front office staff, a dean, an aide, or a specials teacher. Think about who the most beneficial person for the family and student to have a relationship with is, or who is best suited to help you build a relationship with the family and student. It can help to connect with the teachers or advisors your students had in previous years to hear about who already has a relationship with the family.



Plan the conversation.

Since there will be two of you leading, it's important to discuss ahead of time who will lead what and any specific roles each person should play. Use the [Welcome Call Planning Tool](#) in the Appendix.



Connect!

If your partner has an existing relationship with the family, they can set up the time to talk. Share the purpose of the conversation and ask the family for their preference of the day, time, and mode of communication. During the conversation, use the [Questions for Trust Building](#) as a starting place.



Follow the family's lead.

While this strategy might work for some families and educators, it might not work for all. Be flexible and responsive to the family's willingness and ability to engage in these conversations.

Guiding Principles for Beginning of the Year Relationship Building

Regardless of the strategy you choose, these principles should guide your approach to building relationships with your student's families.



Be authentic.

Family engagement is people work— sharing yourself authentically with families will help quickly build trust and rapport. Creating a strong sense of shared humanity can help us feel connected.



Center on the student.

Ask about hopes, dreams, and expectations. This is an incredible opportunity for the teacher, student, and family to align on what's most important to each of them in supporting the student's academic success.



Focus on what is important to the family.

These conversations should emphasize building connections. Focus on the relationship while following the family's lead. Some families might want to share and get to know your background; others might want academic information. Many will want both!



Consistency is key.

Relationships take time. These strategies will start the process of building relationships. Still, it is frequent and consistent communication that allows relationships to grow and sustain, especially if you do not have the opportunity to connect frequently with families in-person.



All families receive outreach.

Every family deserves to have a trusting relationship with their child's teacher. Families should see that relationship building is for everyone!