



# Each and Every Child

## Quick news for Parents, Teachers and Students

An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Student and Family Support Services

### 'I didn't mean to say that'

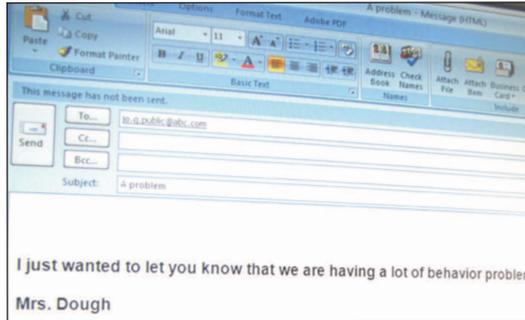
The following recently was sent by email from a teacher to the parent of an autistic child:

"Just wanted to let you know that we are having a lot of behavior problems these last few days."

The parent was frustrated. "There was no inquiry on what might be occurring at home; no supportive vibe; no thoughts as to how we might support my child," the parent said.

The parent is justifiably frustrated. After all, what does the email really say? "Your child is being a pain. Fix it."

The teacher may have had good intentions. But the email focuses on the wrong issue – the child's behavior, rather than concern for the child's success. So by refocusing the issue to that of the child's suc-



cess, the more appropriate question would be: "I'm concerned about some of the things I'm seeing in class. Is there anything I should know about? Do you have some ideas for how I could be more helpful?" The focus, now, is on problem-solving and the child's well being, not on the behavior.

Parents, be upfront (and courteous) about the communication you need. Teachers, do the same. Together, you both are critical to the child's long-term success.

### Welcome?

If you're throwing a party, the one thing you want to make sure is that your guests feel welcome and at ease. If they don't, chances are your guests will be quiet and leave quickly. And good luck in trying to get those people back for another party!

Parents are our "guests" when they come to school. If schools and staff are unwelcoming and intimidating to parents, it should be no surprise as to why teachers have problems getting some parents in for regular visits.

Does your school present a welcoming atmosphere? Ask your par-



ents if your school:

- Feels welcome when entering the school.
- Ensures that everyone in the main office is helpful.

The more inviting your school, the better chance you have of optimizing your parent-teacher experience.

### Don't lose ground this summer

On average, children lose a month's worth of education over their summer vacation. Here are some tips to help reduce that:

- **Keep them reading.**
- **Have a lesson** in daily experiences (such as measuring their snacks or planting seeds).
- **Use online children sites** (such as the PBS website) for activities.
- **Reinforce good behaviors**, like

taking turns, speaking appropriately.

- **Reinforce the rules** the children learn in school.

- **Set an example** by showing the kids how you think through problems; this teaches critical thinking.



### A seminar for you

Do you have questions or concerns about special education law? Then come to the Iowa Department of Education's special education law conference in Iowa City May 19-20. Speakers will talk about academic achievement, discipline, placement, and other topics important to parents, teachers, and school leaders. For more information and to register, go to <http://tinyurl.com/12thl-aIDEAconf> Parents of children with disabilities get a discount. Questions? Call 515-281-5494.

### It's all about ability

This year's National Teacher of the Year, Michelle Shearer of Maryland, said her students have taught her "to always see abilities, not disabilities."

### Share your news!

Have you created a novel program? Had an "a-ha" moment while teaching? We would like to share your news in this e-newsletter. Send your thoughts, successes and innovations to [jim.flansburg@iowa.gov](mailto:jim.flansburg@iowa.gov)

### A giggle

A child comes home from his first day at school. His Mother asks, "Well, what did you learn today?"

The kid replies, "Not enough. They want me to come back tomorrow."



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