

## **Dr. Dorothy Rich's 10 Basic Strategies For TEACHERS: Working With Families**

1. **Recognize that all parents are significant force in their child's education:** call on parents for advice, help, support, and critical evaluation.

2. **Project for parents a realistic picture of what school,** even the best school, can accomplish. School is not a super-institution. It has limited, achievable goals and objectives. Discuss these openly with parents.

3. **Keep parents informed about what's happening in school.** Provide an outline of the month's or year's work; write your philosophy and goals as a teacher, the philosophy of the school. Put as much of this information as possible into readable written material for distribution to parents.

4. **Offer a variety of school-parent programs** and materials whose aim is to build home-school educational partnership. Some will be social, others with a more direct teaching purpose. Don't expect all parents to attend. Find ways to reach parents without their having to come to school.

5. **Show parents you care about their child.** Make a phone call now and then, write a note home, even – and especially – when a child is doing well, not just when a youngster is in trouble.

6. **Tell parents how they can help their children at home.** Provide clearly written home-teaching activities that supplement the work of the school. Keep looking for a variety of ways to involve parents as educational partners.

7. **Tap the resources of the home:** the materials, ideas, expertise that all parents have in different areas. Send a survey, make calls, set up a parent-teaching idea bank. In this way, you will be building up the confidence that parents themselves need in order to fulfill their role as home teachers.

8. **Expect parents to question and to look over your shoulder.** Listen to parents at conferences. As necessary, encourage them to talk.

9. **Hold school doors open to parents, for visiting, for conferring.** Know your community and its resources well enough so that you can refer parents to other institutions when the help for the child and family is the kind the school alone cannot give.

10. **Trust yourself and your common sense:** Show respect for your students' parents by being yourself, not some superhuman model of a teacher.

**And, remember, no one ever said it was easy!**