

How Can I Call the Home Without Fear?

Your objective is to acquire parental support to work cooperatively with you in correcting a student's misbehavior. Your purpose should not be to humiliate the student, "get the student into trouble," aggravate the parents, or have the parents "do something to the kid."

To assist in acquiring parental support, give the parents a copy of the discipline plan to use as a basis for home-school cooperation.

Parents need to see your discipline plan, discuss it with the child, and sign it. You will, of course, want the students to sign it also as an indication that they understand and accept the plan as discussed in class and at home.

The form should be simple and easy to understand. Don't forget to give the parents and the student an extra copy to keep on hand. The form can be as simple as the one shown here.

Effective teachers communicate and work cooperatively with students' parents or guardians. Of course, calling the home is not something most teachers like to do. In fact, most teachers do not know how to call the home. They are as anxious about calling the home as the people at home are to hear from the school. Although such a call usually brings bad news, it need not be that way, even if it is the third violation and you need to call the home to have a misbehavior corrected.

Tell the student to show the action plan to a parent. Inform the student that when you call tonight, you will not call to cause trouble. **You will be calling to discuss the action plan and the behavior, not the person.**

Always deal with the behavior, not the person. You leave a person's dignity intact when you deal only with the behavior or the issue.

Step 1. Call the home in a pleasant, friendly, but businesslike manner. Explain that you are happy to have the student in your class and that the purpose of your call is to discuss the action plan.

The beauty of the action plan system is that there is no argument, confrontation, or aggravation with the parents. Neither party wants that. You did not call to degrade the child, because no parent likes to hear, "You have a no-good, rotten kid who can't come to class on time." Tell parents this and they will reply, "The schools are doing a terrible job."

When this happens, no one wins. The child is not helped, and the purpose of your call is defeated.

Step 2. Explain to the parent that the child has come up with a plan. Impress the parent by explaining this is something the student has done as a result of problem solving and the use of higher-order thinking skills.

Step 3. The reason you are calling is simple:

Mrs. Watson, I am calling to see if I can enlist the cooperation of the adults at home, working together with the school, to see if we can encourage Will to follow through with what he said he would be RESPONSIBLE for doing.

If the parent refuses, go on with your life. You tried. But most parents will not say no because the one thing that parents and teachers want is to instill responsibility. They can't say no to that.

The parents will think the world of you. So will the student. This was all possible because *you* operated in a responsible, problem-solving, self-disciplined way.