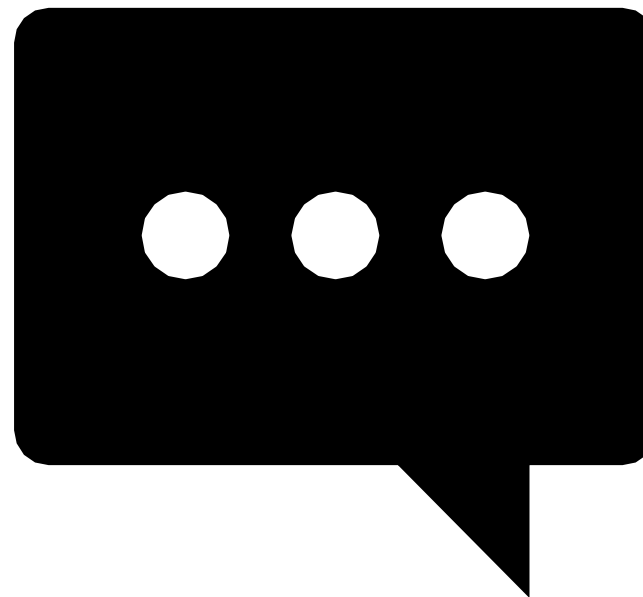


How to Communicate with Your Child's School

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Connecting for Kids



Your New Best Friend: The Communication Binder



FORMAL
DOCUMENTS



WORK SAMPLES



DATA



COMMUNICATIONS
WITH SCHOOL



Formal Documents

Standard documents shared between the school and your family.

Formal Documents

- Evaluations and Standardized Test Scores
- IEP or 504 plan
- Report Cards and Progress Notes
- Behavior Assessments, Plans or Contracts

There are some of the most common formal documents. There may be others that are important for your child.



Formal documents can be intimidating. If you need help understanding them, try the Understood Website (www.understood.org) or contact The Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD).

Evaluations

If your child does not have an IEP:

- Private evaluation reports (for example, reports from a private speech therapist)
- Standardized test scores (DIBELS, MAPS, state tests, etc.)

If your child has an IEP

- Everything on the left
- Most recent Evaluation Team Report (ETR)

IEP or 504

- An **Individualized Education Plan** (IEP) describes the specialized education services the school will provide, the timeline for providing services, and the goals that are used to measure progress. IEPs also include accommodations and modifications.
- A **504 Plan** lists accommodations that can remove barriers to learning. Accommodations under section 504 can be made for any child with a disability, regardless of whether they received specialized education.

IEP

Changes what your child is learning

504

Changes the environment

Report Cards and Progress Notes

○ Report Cards

- Can help you track progress over time
- For older children, report cards can also help you to understand your child's daily schedule

○ Progress Notes

- Progress notes document your child's progress on IEP goals

Exp	Course	T1	Q1
1(M-F)	Art Ed		[i]
2(M-F)	MATH		A 97
3A(M-F)	SUPPLEMENT		[i]
3A(M-F)	PE 7 ACTIVITY		
4A(M-F)	INTERV L ARTS		A 100
6A(M-F)	PE 7 ACTIVITY		
7A(M-F)	SOCIAL STUDIES		A 100
8A(M-F)	SCIENCE		A 100

Sample Report Card from PowerSchool

Behavior Assessments, Plans or Contracts

01

A **Functional Behavioral Analysis** (FBA) is a formal document that helps teachers and parents to understand why a student is behaving in a certain way. It is usually written over several weeks and includes multiple visits to the classroom to collect data.

02

A **Behavior Intervention Plan** (BIP) is a formal document that identifies how the school intends to teach your child strategies to manage behaviors. BIPs are written by behavioral experts and include specific teaching strategies.

03

A **Behavior Contract** is a less formal document between a child and their teacher (and often parents as well). Behavior contracts identify behaviors your child is working on as well as rewards and consequences for meeting goals.

Storing Formal Documents

- We've developed index pages for each type of document you'll keep in your Communication Binder.
- Use the Formal Documents page to keep track of evaluations, test scores, report cards and other formal documents.

Make a note of the documents you are keeping in your communication binder using the printable index page.

COMMUNICATION BINDER

Formal Documents

Formal documents are standard communications used by schools to share certain types of information with families. The most common types of formal documents include evaluations and standardized test scores, IEPs and 504 plans, report cards, and behavior plans.

Document Name	Type	Date
2020-2021 IEP	<input type="checkbox"/> Evaluation <input type="checkbox"/> Test Score <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IEP/504 <input type="checkbox"/> Report Card <input type="checkbox"/> Behavior <input type="checkbox"/> Other	Signed on March 3, 2020



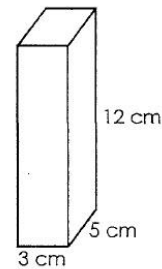
Work Samples

Snapshot in time that can highlight your child's strengths and identify areas of weakness.

Strengths

This sample shows me that the student has a strength in solving math problems with standard equations.

Volume of a Rectangular Prism



To find the volume of a rectangular prism, multiply the length by the width by the height.

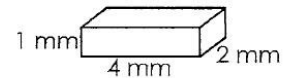
$$V = l \times w \times h \quad V = l \times w \times d$$

$$V = 3 \text{ cm} \times 5 \text{ cm} \times 12 \text{ cm}$$

$$V = 180 \text{ cm}^3$$

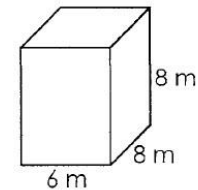
Calculate the volume of each rectangular prism. Be sure to include units in your answer.

a.



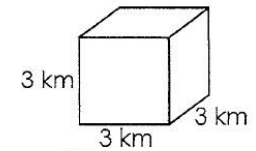
$$V = 8 \text{ mm}^3$$

b.



$$V = 384 \text{ m}^3$$

c.



$$V = 27 \text{ km}^3$$

Challenges

This sample illustrates that the student didn't recall vocabulary terms.

Name _____ Date _____

~~committees~~

debate

~~proposals~~

~~representative~~

At school we have a group of kids that belong to student council. In

order to become a member, students must vote on a

committee

to speak for his or her class. The students

propose

or discuss among themselves issues at school.

Student council also has different

representative

or groups that

plan different activities such as spirit week. They take their plans or

propose

to Mr.

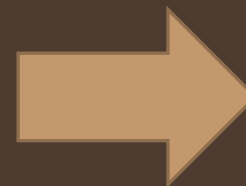
for him to approve.

How do they help?

- The math sample shows that the student can remember mathematical processes and apply them.
- The vocabulary sample showed issues with remembering.

MATH
Concrete, repeated
process

VOCABULARY
Abstract terms



Is there some way I
can make vocabulary
more concrete?

Making vocabulary more concrete

A MINECRAFT CONSTRUCTION CHALLENGE

IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL DAY IN THE CANDY DIMENSION AND K WAS PUTTING ALL HER SHEEP INTO A SMALL, DARK PIT.

CIRCUMSTANCES IN THE PIT WERE BAD THOUGH.

conditions or events that affect a situation.

IT WAS DARK AND COLD. AND

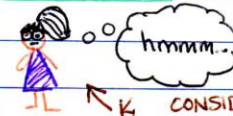
K'S SHEEP KEPT DE-SPAWNING. **FOR A MOMENT, K** WAS

UNSURE OF WHAT TO DO. **SHE TOOK THE PROBLEM UNDER**

not certain. I don't know for sure

CONSIDERATION

careful thought



STILL UNSURE, K DECIDES TO **CONSULT**

to ask for advice

WITH HER MOM. MOM IS

AWESOME AT MINECRAFT AND KNOWS K IS TOO. SHE

TELLS K, "DON'T WORRY. **IT'S YOUR DESTINY**

WHAT HAPPENS, especially when it seems determined in advance

TO FIGURE THIS OUT." K TELLS MOM

THAT THIS IS NOT A HELPFUL ANSWER. **SHE HAD AN**

EXPECTATION THAT MOM WOULD HELP HER FIGURE OUT THE

the belief that certain things will happen

PROBLEM. INSTEAD, MOM JUST RAMBLED ABOUT **DESTINY**

K **CONSIDERED** AGAIN. IT WAS DARK AND COLD IN THE PIT. **MAYBE**

THE PRESENCE OF LIGHT AND HEAT WOULD HELP! BUT WHAT WOULD

the correct location around

MAKE LIGHT AND HEAT? AT FIRST, K

WAS **UNSURE** BUT SHE BEGAN TO HAVE AN IDEA. SHE WENT INTO

CREATIVE, GOT HER MATERIALS AND WAS READY FOR THE

BIG REVEAL

to show, display or make visible



What should you keep?

- **Students with an IEP:** 3-5 samples per IEP goal, per quarter
- **Students without an IEP:** 1 sample per subject per month

These numbers are a rule of thumb that has worked for me. You may need more or fewer samples to keep a snapshot of your child's work.

TIP: Keep work samples that show your child's **strengths** and **challenges**. You can learn from both!



How to store work samples:

COMMUNICATION BINDER

Work Samples

Work samples can help you to see our child's strengths ("here's a math test she did really well on!") and communicate their weaknesses ("he has been getting Cs and Ds on his social studies quizzes -- I wonder if he needs help studying?"). Each of the samples you keep should paint a better picture of your child.

Subject Language Arts/Reading Math Social Studies Science Other

Document Name	Notes	Date
Calculating volume of rectangles	Used calculator; completed independently	9/15/20

- Print a work samples index page for each subject.
- Make notes about what you observed while your child was completing the work.
- For odd sized work (construction paper, note cards), consider using a 3-hole punched folder or sheet protector.



Data

It's not scary – in fact,
you use it all the time!

Subject: Math

Write a check in the box if the student did well. Write an "X" if the student struggled in an area.

	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI
Started work (interest)	✓	X	X		
Stayed on task (focus)	✓	X	✓		
Worked on their own	X	X	✓		
Understood work	✓	✓	✓		

Comments:

Home-School Communication Sheet

- Simple way to communicate how your child is doing in different subject areas
- Can be used for virtual learning or with homework for in-person/hybrid learning.

How To Webpage (with video!)

The screenshot shows the Connecting for Kids website. At the top, there are social media icons for Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest, followed by navigation links: Home, Join us, Get Involved, and Donate. A search bar and a user profile for Karla Fitch are also visible. The main header features the Connecting for Kids logo with the tagline "You're not alone". Below the header is a navigation menu with links: HOME, REGISTER, RESOURCES, AWARENESS, ABOUT, and COVID-19 RESOURCES. The current page is "Home » Communicating Learning Concerns". The main heading is "HOW TO COMMUNICATE CONCERNS WITH YOUR CHILD'S SCHOOL" with a "para español" link. The content is organized into three steps:

- Step 1: Keep Data**

By the end of a week, it can be hard to remember which lessons went well and which didn't. It's even harder if you are working with more than one child. That's why keeping data is your friend.

If the idea of keeping data sounds scary to you, don't worry. We have a [free download](#) that can help.
- Step 2: Check In**

[Check in](#) with your child's teacher weekly to stay on the same page. If you can't talk to your child's teacher during their office hours, send an email.
- Step 3: Don't be Ashamed**

Many children have behavior problems right now. Your child may refuse to do school work. They may throw computers or destroy school supplies.

It's important to tell your child's teacher if your child is having these kinds of problems. [Learn why.](#)

On the right side, there is a video player with the title "How to Communicat... communicate with your child's school" and a "para español" link. Below the video is a call to action: "Our Family Resource Specialists can help you with this process. [Contact us](#) to learn more."

connectingforkids.org/learningconcerns

Other Types of Data

- You may have specific data sheets for tracking IEP goals. Make sure you and your child's teacher are recording things the same way!
 - EXAMPLE: On a reading goal, a child pauses to sound out a word in their head. The parent marks this as an error, but the teacher does not.

TIP: When you send data sheets to your child's teacher, keep a copy for yourself!

COMMUNICATION BINDER

Data Sheets

Data can help you to see trends in your child's learning. Depending on your child's educational needs, you may have informal data sheets that you keep for yourself and formal data sheets that record IEP progress.

Data Type/Notes	Begin Date	End Date
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> IEP Goal <i>Reading fluency, errors per minute - first quarter</i> <input type="checkbox"/> Informal	<i>9/1/2020</i>	<i>11/15/2020</i>



School Communications

- Emails
- Phone calls/in-person communications
- Letters or notes
- Text messages

Why should you keep track?

COMMUNICATION BINDER

School Communications

School communications often include important information including resources, interventions, in names of people involved in your child's education.

Topic/Recipient	Type	Date
Science homework, Mrs. Smith	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Email <input type="checkbox"/> Phone Call <input type="checkbox"/> In Person <input type="checkbox"/> Letter/Note <input type="checkbox"/> Text <input type="checkbox"/> Other	9/12/20

- Often include information you need later
- Can help you remember which interventions you tried and how they worked out
- If you're like me – you'll probably forget the details!

Where to Get More Help

- **Disability Rights Ohio (DRO):** Protection and Advocacy for Individuals with Developmental Disabilities (PADD) Program
 - Serves people in Ohio communities and in developmental centers, and students with developmental disabilities receiving special education in private or public schools or other settings.
 - <https://www.disabilityrightsohio.org/>
- **Ohio Coalition for the Education of Children with Disabilities (OCECD)**
 - Statewide nonprofit organization that serves families of infants, toddlers, children and youth with disabilities in Ohio. OCECD's programs help parents become informed and effective representatives for their children in all educational settings.
 - <https://www.ocecd.org/>

References

- Behavior Contracts: What You Need to Know <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/partnering-with-childs-school/working-with-childs-teacher/behavior-contracts-what-you-need-to-know>
- How to Organize Your Child's IEP Binder (identifies other formal documents you may want to keep) <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/how-to-organize-your-childs-iep-binder>
- School Communication Log https://assets.ctfassets.net/p0qf7j048i0q/21ltAjB2P6CzsjjXRUEyYr/1fa13e406225260adbfde3cb9a0336e9/School_Communication_Log_Understood.pdf
- The Difference Between an IEP and a 504 Plan <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/504-plan/the-difference-between-ieps-and-504-plans>