

Key: Communication (Based on Practice in The Netherlands)

In the world of the school, open and clear communication is of the utmost importance for the teacher, the parents and the child. School and parents need each other for successful education. Furthermore, personal contact between teachers and parents is important and contributes to the school culture. Communication is about the process, the competencies a teacher needs to communicate in a professional way with children and parents.

The process Constructive communication is vital when teachers, parents and children want to work together in a cooperative manner (Bolks, 2011). Communication is influenced by many factors, for example; by the relationships between the participants, by the mood of the participants, by the particular person who is speaking, or by the time of the day. It involves a direct interaction between people, where fast feedback is possible. The transmitter sends a message, the receiver sends a message back, the transmitter is recipient, and then responds, and so on. In order to be able to guide the process as well as possible, the teacher must be aware of different methods that she can use. Jutten (2015) describes eight basic skills for communication that teachers could use. In the manual a variety of methods are explained.

The competencies of a teacher A primary school teacher has to know, and be able to do, a lot of things. These aptitudes, knowledge and skills lie in the field of competencies. In the interpersonal, pedagogical, professionally and organizationally field she must have certain qualities. For example, she should be able to form positive relationships with the children in her class and communicate in an effective way with them, offer them a safe learning environment and be able to facilitate good intrinsic activities or lessons to ensure they develop fully. She should be able to work in a cooperative way with peers and in the environment of the school. This competence includes communicating with parents, important skill for teachers to develop continuously.

Communication with children Communication with children should be an integral part of the speaking opportunities of a teacher including conversations at both group and the individual level. The best way to talk with young children is to join an activity in which the child is doing or initiating a new activity. In that way the teacher will be able to find out the child's thoughts and ideas. It requires the teacher's verbal skills: active listening, connecting to the language level, summarizing, questioning and taking into account the needs of the child.

Communication with parents In the context of appropriate education, parental involvement is relevant. One of the goals of this policy is to strengthen the position of parents in shaping the education and care arrangement for their child. Children learn better and feel happier at school when their parents feel involved in the school. Personal contact between the teacher and the parents is crucial. The teacher has to see parents as partners, they have a common interest which is to enhance the development of the child. It is the teacher's responsibility however, to use and develop skills and techniques to ensure the most effective communication for all.