

Once a teacher has spent time in planning, prayer, lesson preparation and teaching every week, it may feel like quite a stretch to try to connect with a child's family as well! But learning about the family of each child helps give a deeper understanding of each child's experience, environment and personality. This enriches teaching and improves a teacher's ability to design learning experiences to appeal to that child, as well as offering opportunity to model a Christ-like caring for the child and his or her family.

1. Help teachers know the families of their students by providing teachers with up-to-date rosters. List each child's name, address, phone number, birthday, family or address and both first and last names of parents and siblings. Compile rosters from registration forms or family information sheets.
2. Compile a Family Information Sheet for each student. Information could include any of the following:
 - Names of Children
 - Birth Dates
 - Grades in School
 - Name of Parent/Guardian
 - Address
 - Telephone
 - E-Mail
3. Set an attainable goal to encourage your teachers to communicate with at least one child and his or her family each week. Consider giving each teacher a contact kit: a class roster, enough note cards to send one to each child, a pen, decorative stickers, postage stamps, etc.
4. Provide opportunities for teachers to socialize with students and their families by arranging an event such as: going to the beach, hosting a holiday celebration, having a picnic at the park, conducting a service project or work day to benefit someone in need.
5. Plan a series of parent education classes to provide strategies and guidelines on common parenting issues. Invite a speaker (an educator or other knowledgeable person in your church or community) to address an issue of interest to parents—discipline, teaching children spiritual truths at home, etc. Include a time for parents and teachers to talk together.
6. Send out copies of articles of special interest to parents from reproducible parenting resources.
7. Plan ways to support a family when a new baby is born or when a child or parent is ill (meals, child care, etc.).
8. Establish a lending library area near children's classrooms. Stock it with books about child rearing, activities to enjoy with children, age-level characteristics, etc. Encourage parents to sign out these books, returning them in a week or two.