

# Building Relationships and Trust



Trust is important in building and maintaining relationships and resolving conflict.



- Some of the personal qualities and attitudes that contribute to trust are: reliability, competence, honesty and openness.
- As parents deal with the many school-related transitions for their children with disabilities, they may experience a range of emotions. Fathers and mothers may react differently, simply because they are different people. They may have different ways of coping with feelings of grief or loss related to their expectations for their child.
- Teachers can use specific strategies to help build a positive and mutually rewarding working relationship with parents:

- Trust in interpersonal relationships between parents and teachers develops when:

- Both teachers and parents are seen as knowledgeable and competent.
- All decisions are made based on what is best for the child.
- All parties honour their commitment to supporting the child's success.

- Use terminology in clear, everyday words rather than educational jargon.
- Listen to what parents have to say.
- Accept feelings that are expressed.
- When information is new or more complex, parents may need more than one opportunity to discuss it. Introduce a new idea and give parents time to think about it. Follow up with a phone call or meeting a week later to continue the discussion.
- Communicate frequently, and ensure the communication is two-way.
- Be accountable. Only promise what you can deliver. Follow through on your commitments to parents.
- Respect each parent's right to choose his/her own level of involvement.

