

Don't judge – perceptions are important

I. Activity type and description

Some points to consider in setting the tone of interactions with parents.

II. Material/resources needed

While your attitude towards parents is vital, in some ways what's even more important is how parents think you think about them – even if you have the greatest respect in the world for parents, if what comes across to them is patronising and judgemental, forging partnerships will be tricky.

III. Instructions

- Research shows that school staff often underestimate what parents are already doing at home to support learning.
- Remember that coming into school is not the most important part of parental engagement with learning; the main site of engagement is at home.
- Think about how your words and actions are perceived. Parents have often reported that they feel that staff are looking down on them. That may well not be the case – but perceptions are powerful.
- Consider how it would feel to be on the receiving end of the phone call or letter you're about to send home before you do it.
- Remember, just like children and colleagues, parents need encouragement and praise.

IV. References

Goodall, J., & Weston, K. (2018). *100 Ideas for Primary Teachers: Engaging Parents*, Bloomsbury Publishing. Page 10

V. Alternatives

n/a