

## When You Have a Problem

You know the scene, you didn't mean to tell Mr. Johnson his child was a little terror in the room, actually, you didn't use those words at all. But that's what Mr. Johnson got out of what you said. What went wrong? Remember, perception is reality in the minds of the receiver. Word choice can make or break your communication channel with parents.

Read the following statements describing an issue in the classroom. Choose a harmful and helpful way to word each one. Think about how a parent would receive each statement. The first one has been done for you.

Issue	Negative Statement	Positive Statement
<p>Lonnie brings McDonalds food in with her every time her mom is running late (which is quite often). It is causing a problem with the other children.</p>	<p>It isn't fair to the other children when Lonnie brings in McDonalds food. Please get on a good schedule so this won't happen again.</p>	<p>I've noticed that Lonnie really enjoys McDonalds. The other children seem to have a hard time not asking her for food. Perhaps she could eat her breakfast in the car when you are running late. Then she can join right in with the learning activities when she arrives.</p>
<p>Tanisha refuses to clean up during transition from discovery areas to lunch despite your attempts to reason with her and now is trying to convince her friends to be defiant as well.</p>		
<p>Levi has been coming to school dirty for days. His diaper area is chaffed and his clothing smells of urine.</p>		
<p>Clifford brings a backpack full of toys from home every day. The center policy is not to allow toys from home except 1 small item on sharing day.</p>		
<p>Melinda is not dressed properly for the cold weather. She is still wearing summer sandals and shorts even though it is October and the weather is cold. She is unable to participate when you take the class outside.</p>		
<p>Karen refuses to eat lunch every day and by snack time is starving. She says her mother told her she doesn't have to eat anything she doesn't like.</p>		



## Parent Teacher Conferences Assignment #3 Role Playing

- 1) Select 1 of the following scenarios:
  - a) 2-year-old Jacob has developed a biting problem. Several children have been bitten in the last few days. You need to discuss your center's biting policy with the parents as well as develop a plan of action.
  - b) Ethan's parents are continually forgetting to bring in diapers. You ask every day, and now, even if they do bring in a pack, they owe other parents so many, he will be out again tomorrow. You need to address the issue more directly than notes on his chart.
  - c) 4-year-old Jackie has been using very inappropriate language in the classroom. Other children are beginning to pick up the words and today, the parents of another child confronted you about the problem.
  - d) Lisa has been hiding when it is time to come inside. On several occasions, a teacher has had to go back out to look for her. You are concerned for her safety, and also that other children will begin to follow her example. Lisa thinks it is funny when you talk with her and you need to address the subject with her parents. You would like to discuss appropriate consequences for her actions with them.
  - e) Select a scenario of your own. Take care not to violate privacy issues by discussing an actual situation with someone who is not involved.
- 2) Ask a family member or co-worker to role-play the initial parent phone conversation with you where you call the parent to introduce the issue and ask for a conference. Do not leave the parent guessing as to what needs to be discussed. This will only make them worry more than necessary.
- 3) Role-play the in-person conference with the same co-worker or family member. Be sure to state the problem clearly. Ask for any suggestions the parent might have and then listen carefully to what they say. Ask for clarification on any statements that you may not understand. Finally, develop a plan for success in the future and how the situation will be handled should the problem occur again.
- 4) Write a summary on what you did well and what could be improved on. Ask your role-play partner for any in-input they feel would be beneficial.