

A tool from the September 2020 Newsletter



Basic Email Templates

Email communication can be tricky, especially when we are communicating with someone who might not know us very well and may not agree with us. Emailing about school advocacy or an issue at school can be hard because you may be experiencing many strong, complex emotions as you try to write your email.

Though you may be trying to maintain [generous assumptions](#), if you've had a tough relationship with the person you're emailing—or with the advocacy process in general—that can be challenging. Instead, you may be finding it easier to slip into the [fundamental attribution error](#). This where we acknowledge how external factors impact our own behaviors and feelings but do not similarly recognize this reality for others—that is, we “tend to cut [ourselves] a break while holding others 100 percent accountable for their actions.” The key to an effective email is making sure emotions—yours or your recipient's—don't obscure your message.

While those emotions are valid and important to recognize, they can cloud your message for the person reading your email. Here are some quick tips when writing emails to your child's educational team:

- **Wait 24-48 hours before sending the email, especially if you are upset or agitated:** A cooling off period can help you to make sure your message is clear and respectful, setting you up for effective advocacy efforts later. While the situation at hand may be extremely upsetting or frustrating, remember that advocacy is a long process. Keep your long-term goals in mind.
 - If there is an immediate concern about safety (physical or emotional), try sending a brief email (1-2 paragraphs) informing the recipient of the situation. This email can summarize the situation, but indicate that you will follow-up with your thoughts on the situation once you have some time to reflect on it further.
- **Be direct and respectful:** Everyone is busy. This is why it is important to be clear and direct in your communication. However, remember that you are communicating with a person who also is juggling multiple responsibilities as they try to navigate the uncertainty of this school year.
- **Have someone else read your work:** Just like we tell students to double-check their work, it can be useful to have someone else who isn't as closely related to the situation

to read your email. This outside perspective can help to understand where your message may lack clarity.

Below are a few templates of common emails to help you get started:

- Introductory Email - to help you introduce your profoundly gifted or twice-exceptional child's learning profile and needs
- Brief Meeting Request Email - to help you clearly and directly request a meeting
- Follow-Up Email - to help you clearly and directly follow-up on the plans and agreements made in a meeting
- General Check-In - to help you to efficiently and consistently stay in communication with your child's educator

Introductory Email

Dear *[Recipient's Name]*,

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to introduce myself and my student, *[Child's Name]*.

Our family has been at *[School's Name]* for *[Period of Time]*. We are excited to work with you this year.

I wanted to take this opportunity to share some information with you about *[Child's Name]*'s learning profile, so we can have a productive and collaborative school year. After testing, we've learned that *[Child's Name]* is profoundly gifted. Profoundly gifted children score in the 99.9th percentile on intelligence or achievement testing. They also have a unique developmental profile. This can often lead to asynchronies across academic, intellectual, social, and emotional development.

Because of *[Child's Name]*'s asynchronous development and learning style, we've noticed *[Child's Name]* thrives when *[Provide 1-3 specific sentences about your child's learning profile]*.

I have noticed that *[Child's Name]* struggles with *[Provide 1-3 specific sentences of information about your child's challenges]*. I have found *[Provide 1-3 concrete practices]* seems to help *[Child's Name]* when such struggles arise.

I understand that keeping a profoundly gifted student intellectually and academically challenged while managing a classroom is difficult. I look forward to collaborating with you this term to support both *[Child's Name]* and your classroom experience.

I have found it has been helpful to all involved if I am in regular communication with *[Child's Name]*'s teachers. How do you prefer to communicate with parents? Could we schedule a time to meet to discuss how I can best support your classroom efforts at home with *[Child's Name]*?

Thank you for your time. I look forward to working with you this year.

All best,

[Your Name]

[Your Contact Information]

Brief Meeting Request

Dear [*Recipient's name*],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to ask if [*Insert Request - 1-2 sentences*].

I am requesting this because [*Supporting Context – 3-4 sentences to succinctly explain the situation/context of what is happening, you may think through the 5 W questions: Who? What? Where? When? Why?*].

Would this be possible?

If there's more clarifying information I can provide, or if you'd like to meet to discuss this further, please let me know.

Best,

[*Your name*]

[*Your contact information*]

Follow-Up

Dear [*Recipient's Name*],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to follow-up on the [*meeting/conversation*] that we had on [*Date*].

During this [*meeting/conversation*], we discussed:

- [*List of topics*]

We agreed that:

- [*List of items agreed on*]

The following concerns were not resolved during this [*meeting/conversation*]:

- [*List of remaining concerns*]

To address these concerns, I would like to [*Suggested Action – next meeting, etc.*]. What are your thoughts? Does this work for you?

Thank you for helping me to support [*Child's Name*]. I look forward to continuing this conversation.

Best,

[*Your Name*]

[*Your Contact Information*]

General Check-In

Dear [*Recipient's Name*],

I hope this email finds you well. I am writing to see how things are going for [*Child's name*] at school.

[Your check-in priorities will differ based on your child's development and experiences. Below are a few basic questions you can use to help you construct your Check-In Email.]

We've discussed that [*Child's Name*] is working [*Specific Skills*]. How has that been going?

I'm concerned about [*Insert Concern*]. What have you been noticing?

What have your general observations been about [*Child's Name*] over the last month?]

Thank you for your time. I look forward to your insights.

Best,

[*Your Name*]

[*Your Contact Information*]