

A Telephone Call from School

Knack receives a telephone call from Specs' school and panics, thinking that the school is calling with news that the worst has happened. Knack is relieved to hear that Specs is fine; the school is just calling to let parents know about an upcoming field trip.

Narrated Message // *Phone calls from school can be a bit intimidating for us parents. We worry about our children when they are away at school and language barriers can sometimes be an issue. For the well-being of our children, there may be many reasons why our children's teacher might contact us. When they called Knack they just wanted to confirm the drop-off time for an upcoming school trip. Active communication with our children's school allows us to support and enhance their academic and social progress.*

IDEAS

- We might feel nervous or anxious when the school contacts us. Many of us can feel concern about contacting or returning phone calls to the school.
- We might need information about different ways to talk to each other and more skill in building positive home and school relationships.
- It can help to learn about how the school system works and understand who is there to do what and help in different ways.
- Opportunities to connect with the school can be useful: for example, giving the school your email address and telephone number, taking part in parent-teacher meetings, or using the school website to find out about news and activities.

QUESTIONS FOR GROUP DISCUSSION

Family Members

1. What are some of the messages in this film?
2. Why is it difficult to get calls like these? What are parents concerned about?
3. Why would the school need to contact parents or family members?
4. What are other ways that the school may try to contact adults in the family? Who are the people from the school who might contact you?
5. What could the school do to make these calls easier for parents?
6. What additional suggestions or personal stories do you have to share?

School Staff and Community Leaders

1. Why does good communication with parents improve their likelihood of building positive relationships with the school?
2. Why does good communication with parents improve students' chances of doing well at school?
3. How do Aboriginal families' experiences (such as residential schools) have an impact on our communication with them?
4. How can schools be more aware and think about these issues further to help make families more comfortable?
5. How can teachers and school staff help make parents more comfortable about the calls, letters or emails that the school might send out?
6. What additional responses or strategies might further support and meet the specific needs of Aboriginal families in this regard?
7. Who are the key people at your school or board who could help with this issue? For example, does your school have someone who specifically helps Aboriginal families?