

Introduction To The Parent Communication Project (PCP) 25

[Parent Communication Project Module](#)

Grade Level Range: Middle School – High School. I did this project for years with 6th graders.

To the Teacher:

The purpose of this culminating learning experience, the Parent Communication Project (PCP), is to provide students the opportunity to use communication skills (passive & active listening, genuine inquiry questions, and I Statements) in real-life situations (with their parents). Like most skills (e.g., playing a musical instrument, shooting a basketball, etc.), social-emotional skills are complex and not easily learned. To develop proficiency, students must be given multiple opportunities to practice the skills in class and in real life. They need to process their use of the skills and, whenever possible, receive feedback on what they did well and what they need to do to improve, and then modify their response. Using skills in real-life situations, processing the results, and modifying their responses are necessary and must be continuous.

Adolescence is a difficult time for most students and their parents. The PCP project has the added benefit of increasing effective communication within families. As a result of participating in this project, my 6th-grade students frequently reported that their relationship with the parent who took part in it had significantly improved. They found they could get their point across more effectively; their parent listened more, tried to understand them, and considered what they said more often than before the project. Students also reported that it helped them understand their parents better and why they made the decisions they did. In addition, since many adults are not proficient in these skills, the project provides them with the opportunity to learn, relearn, or become more proficient. The readings provide background information about the skills, and the skill card allows them to “see” what the skills look like. Hopefully, their adolescent will act as a role model.

Before beginning this project, students must be skillful in passive and active listening, asking genuine inquiry questions, using “I Statements,” and avoiding “You Statements.” See the following in [Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#) for background information and learning experiences that facilitate the development of these skills:

1. Healthy Relationships Reading ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
2. Listening & Inquiry Reading ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
3. Listening & Inquiry Skill Card ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
4. Listening & Inquiry Learning Experiences ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
5. I Statements Reading ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
6. I Statements Skill Card ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
7. I Statements Learning Experiences ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))
8. Listening, Inquiry, & I Statements Skill Card ([Relationship Skills & Healthy Relationships](#))

The communication skills addressed in this project include:

1. Passively Listen: Pay Attention and Show Interest
2. Actively Listen: Paraphrase/Summarize the Content of What Is Said
3. Actively Listen: Paraphrase/Summarize Spoken and Unspoken Feelings
4. Ask Genuine Inquiry Questions to Help Them Understand What One Is Saying & Feeling
5. Avoid “You” Statements (criticism, put-downs, preaching, threats, being demanding)
6. Use “I” Statements: Share What They Are Feeling & Why They Are Feeling That Way

Student & Parent Materials For This Project

1. **Student and Parent PCP Monitoring Charts & Directions** ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)). Students use the Student Self-Monitoring Chart to record their daily use of the communication skills, and parents use the Parent Monitoring Chart to record their adolescents’ daily use of the communication skills.
2. **PCP Parent Letter Template** ([Parent Communication Project Module](#))
This letter explains the PCP project to parents, outlines expectations, and obtains their participation agreement.
3. **Listening, Inquiry, and I Statements Skill Card** ([Parent Communication Project Module](#))
At least initially, students use this skill card when communicating with their parents. Parents review the skill card to understand the skills better.
4. **How To Give Feedback Skill Card** ([Parent Communication Project Module](#))
This skill card provides additional information on how to give feedback.

Student Assessment Materials For This Project

The following materials are found in the PCP Student Assessment document ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)).

1. **PCP Beginning of the Project Likert Scale**
Students assess their use of the communication skills at the beginning of the project.
2. **Communicating With My Parent Weekly Assessments**
Students complete a weekly assessment of their use of the skills throughout the project.
3. **PCP Progress Likert Scale and PCP Effort Rubric**
At the end of the project, students assess their progress using the skills.
4. **PCP Effort Likert Scale and PCP Student Effort Rubric**
At the end of the project, students assess their effort using the skills throughout the project.

5. **PCP End of the Project Summary Questions**
Students identify the skills they used most effectively and which skills they need the most work on.
6. **Generic Rubric For Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge**
7. Students use this rubric to assess and grade their work on the Weekly Assessments and the Project Summary Questions.
8. **PCP Grade Summary**
Students use this form to record all grades for this project. Teachers later include their grades for students' answers on the Weekly Assessments and the Project Summary Questions.

Parent Assessment Materials For This Project

The following materials are found in the PCP Parent Assessment document ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)).

1. **PCP Parent Weekly Feedback**
Parents complete weekly assessments of students' use of the skills and then share their results.
2. **PCP Parent Assessment of Progress Likert Scale and PCP Parent Assessment of Progress Rubric**
At the end of the project, parents assess their adolescent's progress using the skills.
3. **PCP Parent Assessment of Effort Likert Scale and PCP Parent Assessment of Effort Rubric**
At the end of the project, parents assess their adolescent's effort throughout the project using the skills.
4. **PCP End of the Project Summary Questions For Parents**
Parents identify the skills their adolescent used most effectively and which skills they need the most work on.
5. **PCP End of the Project Parent Grade Summary**
Parents assign a grade for their student's progress and effort using the End of the Project Progress and Effort Rubrics.

Procedures/Directions:

1. Create a letter to parents outlining the project's goals, with a signature sheet emphasizing their crucial role in its success. See the PCP Parent Letter Template ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)). It also outlines the expectations for parent participation.
2. If a student's parent decides not to or is unable to participate in this project, a student may do it with someone else whom they come in regular contact with, who is older, will be willing and able to chart their progress daily, and honestly assess their effort. Another option is for the student to do it with a parent using the same process, although the parent would not do the daily monitoring and would not do the evaluation at the end of the project.
3. Ensure all necessary materials are readily available for parents, including the PCP Parent Weekly Feedback, which is found in the Parent Assessment document ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)), the PCP Parent Monitoring Chart & Directions ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)), and the Giving Feedback Skill Card ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)).
4. Review the importance of being an effective communicator with your students.
5. Review and model the different parts of active and passive listening, asking genuine inquiry questions, and using I Statements. See the Listening, Inquiry, & I Statement Skill Card ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)).
6. Provide students with copies of the PCP Student Self-Monitoring Chart and Directions ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)) and review how the chart will be used.
7. Provide students copies of the PCP Beginning of the Project Likert Scale, the Communicating With My Parent Weekly Assessment, which are found in the Student Assessment document, and the Listening, Inquiry, and I Statements Skill Card ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)).
8. For a minimum of 21 out of 28 days, students use communication skills daily when communicating with their parents or parents participating in the project.
9. Depending on their developmental and skill level, it is recommended that students use the Listening, Inquiry, and I Statements Skill Card ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)), at least initially, when communicating with their parents.
10. Each day before bedtime, students rate themselves on their use of the skills, and parents do the same on separate monitoring charts.
11. Every seven days, students and parents complete the PCP Weekly Assessment ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)) independently of one another and then share their results. Students and parents each identify 1-2 skills used effectively during that week and one skill the students need to do better or use more consistently.

12. Remind them they are not expected to be proficient at the beginning or maybe even at the end of this project. The ability to be an effective communicator is challenging to master. These skills must be done repeatedly and in multiple situations to feel comfortable and become proficient. The key is to make progress and to understand why they are effective and what they need to do to become more effective in the future.
13. Explain the grading procedures. Outlined below are different ways to assess and grade this project.
14. Review the *Stages in Learning a New Skill* (see below).
15. Every week, ask volunteers to share how effectively they used the skills, which skills they used more effectively, and which skills they need to work on to be more effective.
16. At the end of the project, provide students with copies of all of the following documents which are located in PCP Student Assessments ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)): the PCP The End of the Project Likert Scale and the PCP Effort Rubric, PCP Effort Likert Scale and the PCP Student Effort Rubric, PCP End of the Project Summary Questions, Generic Rubric For Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, &Self-Knowledge, and the PCP Grade Summary.
17. At the end of the project, provide parents with copies of all of the following documents which are located in the PCP Parent Assessments ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)): PCP Parent Assessment At The End of the Project Likert Scale and PCP Parent Assessment of Progress Rubric, PCP Parent Assessment of Effort Likert Scale and PCP Parent Assessment of Effort Rubric, PCP End of the Project Summary Questions For Parents, and PCP End of the Project Parent Grade Summary.
18. At the end of the project, have students bring all required work to class. Have them complete all assessments, place the documents in the identified order, and turn them in. See the Procedures for Grading outlined below.
19. At the end of the project and before students turn in their work, ask volunteers to share their answers to the End of the Project Summary Questions ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)). If students are reluctant to share, you may want to use the “Are You Someone Who” or the “Thumb O Meter” techniques in How To Teach SES in the [How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#).
20. For additional information on the process and steps in teaching social-emotional skills, see How To Teach SES in the [How To Teach Social-Emotional Skills Module](#)

Stages in Learning a New Skill

It is helpful for students to understand that learning social-emotional skills is not easy and that they will go through different stages in the process. The stages in learning a new skill include:

1. Feeling self-conscious and awkward when using the skill.
2. Feeling phony while engaging in the skill. When teaching these skills, my students would constantly say: “No one talks like this,” or No one does these things. My response was that, unfortunately, not enough people talk like this, and that is a significant reason why so many people are unable to successfully work through misunderstandings, impasses, and conflicts in relationships, or maybe the reason so many people are unsuccessful at reaching their goals is that they don’t.
3. Their use becomes more skilled, but it is still mechanical.
4. They master the skill, and its use becomes natural, automatic, and fully integrated into their behavioral repertoire. They can use the skill without thinking about it.

Assessment & Grading for the Parent Communication Project

See the PCP Student Assessments document ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)) and the PCP Parent Assessment document ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)) for all the assessment documents discussed below.

Possible Assessment & Grading Procedures

Depending on the project's complexity, the following assessments may be used:

Student Assessments (found in the Student Assessments document) ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)):

1. Teacher grade (and/or student self-assessment) of the completeness and depth of their answers on all written work on the Weekly Assessments and the End of Project Summary Questions using the Generic Rubric For Assessing Self-Awareness, Self-Insight, & Self-Knowledge.
2. Student Self-assessment of their progress at the end of the project using the PCP Progress Likert Scale and the PCP Effort Rubric.
3. Student Self-assessment of their effort using the PCP Effort Likert Scale and the PCP Student Effort Rubric
4. Student Self-assessment of the extent to which they charted every day. For example, if you assigned the project for 21 days and they didn’t chart four days (they had 4 “Zs”), they charted on 17 of 21 days, so their grade is 85 (14 divided by 21).

Parent Assessments (found in the Parent Assessments document) ([Parent Communication Project Module](#)):

5. Parent assessment of progress using the PCP Parent Progress Likert Scale and the PCP Parent Assessment of Progress Rubric.
6. Parent assessment of effort using the PCP Parent Progress Likert Scale and the PCP Parent Assessment of Progress Rubric.

Collecting All the Work at the End of the Project

As you are aware, collecting multiple papers for projects can be daunting and an organizational nightmare if you cannot review, assess, and grade student documents online. At the end of the project, have students bring all required work to class. It is easier to take them through each of the assessments one at a time in class to avoid confusion. Have students transfer their grades from the documents you will collect to the PCP Grade Summary. If you cannot review, assess, and grade student documents online, have them place all hard copies in the same order listed on the PCP Grade Summary with the PCP Grade Summary on top. If you are collecting hard copies, providing them with a manila file folder may be helpful. See below for an example of a generic assessment grade summary.

Reporting Grades

Decide whether you want to give a single grade for the entire project, including all criteria, or report each separately. Reporting each criterion separately (e.g., a grade for their effort, a grade for their progress, and a grade for a self-assessment of their written work, a grade of your assessment of their written work) provides more specific, detailed feedback for students and parents. If you are giving separate grades, you must determine the weight each one will have and let them know at the beginning of the project.

For additional information on assessment and grading, see the How To Assess & Grade SES in the [Assessment & Grading Module](#)