

M&R teachers emphasized the need to know the parents well and to develop a positive working relationship. Home visits are considered important, particularly for parents who do not come to scheduled appointments at school. It is important to let the parents know exactly what is happening with their child in school, to share the successes and also discuss the difficulties that are being experienced.

Parents typically have contact with the same M&R teacher over a number of years, which may prevent parents from seeing that the classroom teacher is responsible for the student's program. Most of the M&R teachers feel that the special relationship they have with the parent is positive but are concerned that the regular teacher and the parent develop a good relationship based on confidence and trust. Among the strategies they use is to have the regular teacher make the phone call to arrange a meeting and to have the teacher chair the planning meetings. This shows that the teacher is in charge of the child's education.

The relationship between high school teachers and parents seems weaker than at other levels. High school teachers usually instruct five or six classes a day and their relationships with individual students is superficial compared to elementary and junior high teachers. As a result, the sense of responsibility for the child's total program is not as developed. Making the relationship even more difficult is the fact that many high school teachers only contact parents when there is something wrong, such as when the child isn't attending school regularly or has had a serious behavioural incident. As a result, the relationship is based on negative events and can be adversarial.

At the high school level, the M&R teacher assumes more responsibility for the programs of students with more severe disabilities. This creates a problem of transfer of identity:

*I'm still the one that parents call. The regular teachers haven't made any effort to get in touch with the parent*