

# Following up after a Reactive Communication

## Rationale

Ideally, there should be five positive communications for every negative one. As teachers, we inevitably have to have tough conversations about behavior, attendance, or academics. In a perfect world, the strong relationships you've built with families will make these conversations solutions-oriented and productive.

After having a reactive conversation, it's important to follow up with the family. It shows them that their involvement in the problem solving process is invaluable.

Text messaging allows families and teachers to communicate at their convenience and provides a written record for both parties to reflect on later.

### Norms for Texting

1. Text during the hours that you would like to receive a text. Assume the best if you don't get an immediate response.
2. Invite families to respond by including a prompt or a question.
3. A picture of the student in action is a great way to get attention.
4. If you aren't getting a response, check with the family member- numbers change often. In the meantime, try a personal note, in-person conversation, or an email.

## Artifact Description

In this artifact, the teacher follows up with the family after a tough conversation in three different contexts.

1. **Behavior:** the student, ordinarily calm and rarely tearful, had begun throwing temper tantrums multiple times a day. The teacher talked with the father over the phone and discussed possible reasons for the behavior change. Together, they devised a solution. The teacher then monitored the student's behavior for the following couple of days. The teacher's aim in this conversation is to demonstrate that the father had improved his daughter's school behavior by holding her accountable for at home.
  2. **Attendance:** The student had missed more than 20 days within the first three months of school. After talking with the mother in person at pickup and through other text message conversations, it seemed like a factor in poor attendance was the family's perception that pre-kindergarten was just playtime. The teacher's aim in this conversation is to share the rich academic activities that the student misses when she stays home from school.
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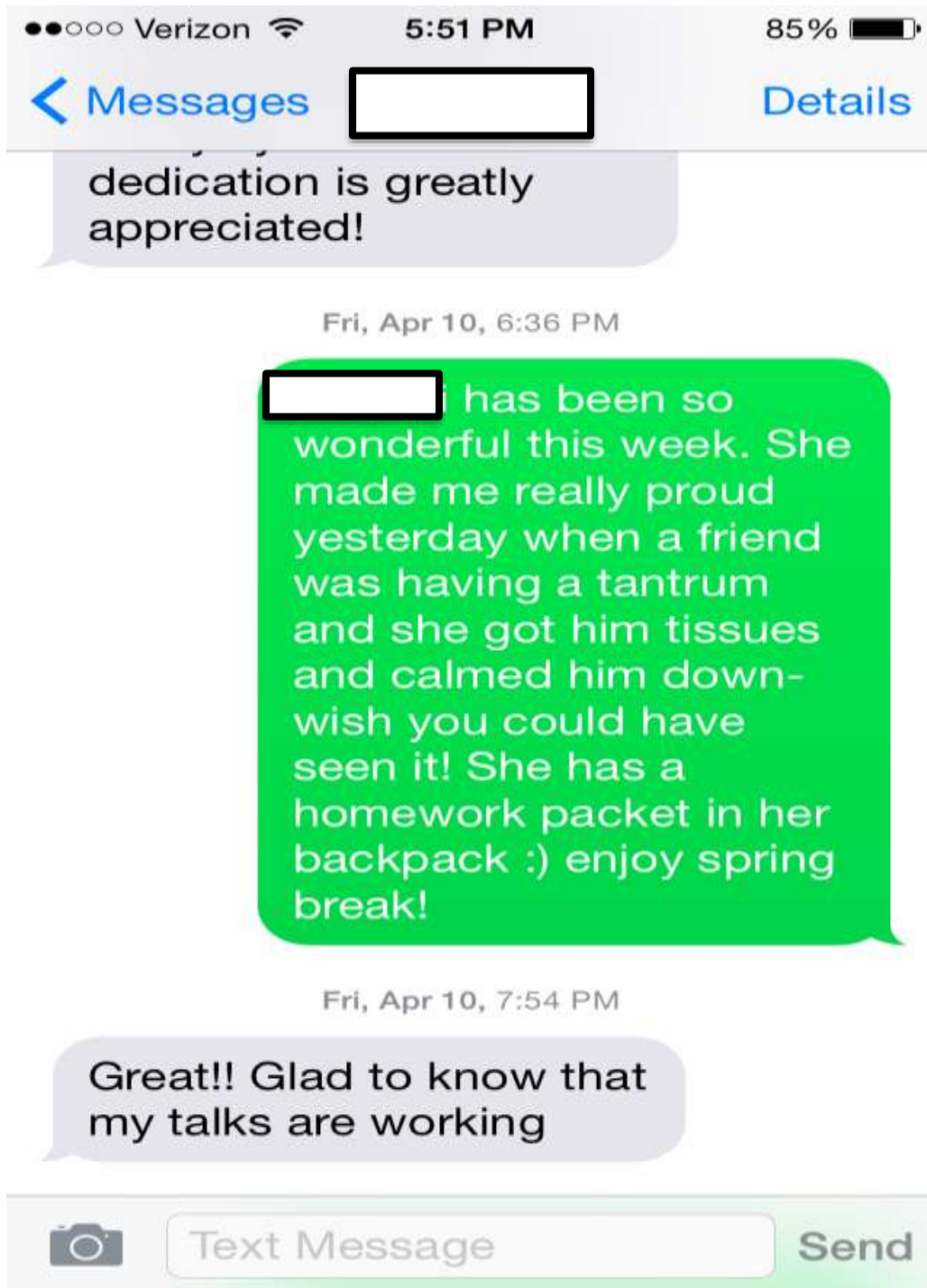


*Created by Claire Gunner*

- 3. Academics:** The mother of this student had recently come to the teacher to express her frustration that her daughter didn't know as many sight words as her peers. She had become worried after her daughter did not receive the highest distinction at the mid-year award ceremony. The teacher's aim in this conversation is to show that both parent and teacher are working toward the same goals.



1. Behavior Follow-up: (student's name) made me really proud when she (specific instance of improved behavior). I wish you could have seen it!



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2. Attendance Follow-Up: Send a photo of the student working on an academic activity. In this case, the student had struggled with this name-spelling task but had finally succeeded. Include something like "See you tomorrow!" or "Great attendance pays off!" to connect the idea of academic success with consistent attendance.



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3. Academics Follow-Up. Send an update on the academic skill where the student has shown recent growth. Include a celebratory picture if possible! After the family member responds, say something about the future, such as, "I can tell (practicing (academic skill or APTT activity) at home is really helping (student name), let's keep it up!"

