

## **What are some ways to approach difficult parents?**

Begin with the positive. Remember that no matter how hard a student has been to deal with, s/he is that parent's child. Often, by beginning with the good news, it may soften the effect of the bad. Next, enlist the help of the parent. Ask for the parent's help to solve the problem. After all, you wouldn't be calling if you had been able to solve the problem on your own. If you are not calling to help solve the problem but only to seek revenge or punishment for the child, do not call. You will not help the problem dissipate but may now cause the student to punish you for your behavior, either overtly or covertly. The parent may tell the kid that the teacher was not interested in helping them and/or begin to shout at the child and then s/he comes to school and takes it out on the teacher.

Express that you care about the student and his/her success. If a parent has no suggestions, you may want to suggest a few of your own and ask if they think if these will help to solve the problem. The counselor, psychologist, or others in the school may also have suggestions to help.

If the parent has initiated the contact and is somewhat antagonistic or argumentative, you may want to acknowledge that you are human and therefore not perfect but that you would like to resolve the situation. Asking what the parent wants as a result of the conversation may bring it more quickly to a close. If the parent is aggressive or hostile toward you, you should enlist the help of an administrator. Don't place yourself in the position of being alone in a room with someone when the situation could escalate and get out of hand.