# M5: Responding to an Angry Email

## Course

Special Education

## Location

Module 5

## Alignments

### Course Outcomes

CLO V: Describe the utility of important collaborative relationships: school, district, and family members/guardians.

### Module Outcomes

MLO 5.2: Apply evidence-based and equitable practices in communication and collaboration with partners in the special education process.

### Specific InTASC Standards

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **InTASC** | **Type** | **Specific Standard** |
| 10n | Knowledge | The teacher knows how to work with other adults and has developed skills in collaborative interaction appropriate for both face-to-face and virtual contexts. |

## Assignment Instructions

### Purpose

As Module 5 has shown, collaborative partnerships are crucial when serving students with disabilities. Teachers partner with other teachers, service providers, parents/guardians, administrators, and social workers, in addition to many others, to ensure that students are supported in ways that promote academic growth and opportunity. Because collaboration is such an essential element of this work, it is not uncommon for disagreements to arise.

This activity invites you to thoughtfully consider how you might respond to an angry parent/guardian who is concerned about the quality of services provided for their child. While the letter below is intentionally broad, you will have the opportunity to consider who the student by writing their backstory, including context about their academic and home life, which can then be used to inform your response to the angry parent/guardian.

### Task

#### Instructor Preparation for Activity

* Read the email from the angry parent/guardian.
* Identify ways you might respond to this email.
* Think about the communication techniques that you would use to guide students through the discussion.

#### Student Directions

For this activity, you will work independently.

1. Read the email from an angry parent/guardian below.
2. Draft a response to the parent/guardian using the communication techniques you learned about in Module 5.
3. After you have drafted your response, read through it again and reflect on the communication techniques you used. Write a summary of the techniques you used below your response to the parent/guardian.
   1. If this is an online discussion, post your response and summary to the appropriate discussion board.
   2. If this is a face-to-face class, when your instructor indicates it is time to have a class discussion, be prepared to share your response and the communication techniques you used with your class.

### Successful Responses Include the Following Elements

* Create a one paragraph backstory for the student you are responding to; include this information before your email that acknowledges the student’s identity and experiences
* Write (at least) a 4-paragraph response to the angry parent/guardian’s email addressing all their concerns. Be sure to include a greeting where you address the angry parent/guardian and a signature where you end the email with a sign off and your first and last name.
* As you draft your response, consider the importance of interpersonal, intrapersonal, and cultural communication and how they might be applied in this scenario.
* Remember: It’s important to be authentic, but it’s also important to remain respectful, empathetic, and aware of how you might be perceived through your communications.

### The Angry Email:

The following email was generated from Microsoft Copilot (2024).

Dear Director of Special Education Services,  
  
I am writing to you out of sheer frustration and disappointment regarding the services my child, who is on the autism spectrum, is receiving through their Individualized Education Program (IEP).  
  
Despite the promises made by your team, my child's unique needs are not being met. The current IEP seems to be a one-size-fits-all solution that is failing to address the specific challenges my child is facing. This is not acceptable.  
  
Even more concerning is the lack of individual attention my child receives. It is well-known that children on the autism spectrum require more personalized attention and instruction. This is a non-negotiable aspect of their education and is currently missing from my child's IEP.  
  
Moreover, the communication between the school and our family is far from satisfactory. We are left in the dark about our child's progress, and our input seems to be an afterthought. This is our child's future we are talking about, and we demand to be involved in the process.  
  
I insist on a meeting to discuss these issues as soon as possible. The current situation is not sustainable; changes need to be made to the IEP to ensure it is serving my child's needs.  
  
I expect prompt action on this matter. Our children deserve nothing less than the best possible education and it is your responsibility to ensure they receive it.  
  
Sincerely,  
An Angry Parent/Guardian

## **Reference**

Microsoft. (2024). *Copilot.* [www.bing.com/chat.](http://www.bing.com/chat)