

Effective Communication:

Characteristics of Passive, Assertive and Aggressive Behavior

Assertive behavior is always the most effective for communication at school, at home, and in most situations. Assertive behavior is being able to articulate and express your ideas, needs, and feelings in a way that is honest and direct. Being assertive will help you carry self-confidence in all situations, and will win you the respect of others.

Type of Behavior	Characteristics of the Behavior	Example of how this behavior could play out
Passive	A person may often: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Whines -Blames and accuses others -Uses indirect statements to express what is bothering him/her -May be dishonest -Avoids situation or solving problems hoping they will get resolved on their own -Complains to others instead of the person that needs to hear the complaint -May develop a “Whatever!” attitude 	Parent to Neighbor: <i>“I never got a progress report from school. My son’s school can’t do anything right. I won’t even bother talking to them about it because they are incompetent and the two times I visited the school’s main office they didn’t pay attention to me.”</i>
Assertive	A person may often: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Engage in active listening to understand others’ points of views -Makes choices with the information given -Gives choices and alternatives to others -Is honest about feelings and intentions -Is direct when expressing what is bothering him/her -shows personal accountability and makes others accountable -Addresses problems and concerns with the appropriate person 	Parent to Staff in School’s Main Office: <i>“I did not get my child’s report card in the mail. Can you please double-check my home address in your records, and provide me with a copy of the report?”</i> Parent to Teacher: <i>“I need to know about my child’s academic progress in your class and I would like for us to set up monthly meetings to discuss this. When are you available to meet with me this month?”</i>
Aggressive	A person often: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Blames and accuses others -Uses name-calling, profanity, and a loud voice when communicating with others -Uses sarcasm to invalidate what the other person is saying -Is not interested in understanding others’ points of views -May threaten others to pressure them into responding the way he/she wants 	Parent to School Principal: (Yelling): <i>“Your school is full of unqualified and idiotic teachers and front office staff! I could do a better job than any of them! I really should just take my child to another school.”</i>