**You and Your Child's Teacher**

**Ken Canfield, Ph.D.**

*April 27, 2007*

There are many things you can do to ease the transition into a new school year. If your kids are like mine, they already have the scoop on their new teachers. Mrs. So-and-so is strict; Mr. So-and-so is really hard; Mrs. So-and-so lets you get away with anything.

One study found that, for 64% of the parents surveyed, the number one concern in their children's education is the teacher.

Not every teacher will be perfect for your child. And sometimes it's easy for us parents to get caught up in our children's negative or even hostile feelings toward their teachers. But as caring, involved fathers, we can do a lot to ease the tension and help our kids do their best with their teachers. I have six positive ideas to share with you.

First, **get to know the teacher**. Establish a friendly relationship early, so your first meeting isn't over a problem.

Second, **keep your child's teacher up-to-date on problems at home**. She'll be better prepared if she knows about the illness, divorce or death in the family.

Third, **be quick to give praise**. If the teacher handled a certain project with certain creativity, and it really paid off with your child, send her a note to say "thanks." One compliment will go a long way.

Number four: **deal with problems early**. If your son or daughter is confused in some subject, notify the teacher and ask how you can help before it becomes a serious problem.

Fifth, **be realistic**. Teachers today are under a tremendous amount of stress. Lower your expectations, and allow them to make a few mistakes.

Finally, **don't jump to conclusions**. Sometimes children come home and tell you only the most sensational incidents-which may have already been through two or three stages of gossip. Do your best to stay calm and work out the problem in a constructive manner.

The new school year has just started. Let's all do our best to start the year as the partner of your child's teacher-not her adversary. That one teacher may turn out to be the best your child ever had.