

DANBURY STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE

ROLE OF THE PRIMARY GRADE TEACHER IN
TEACHER-PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIPS

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INTRODUCTION

The field of school public relations, which keeps the child as its focus against the essential background of society's needs, is particularly extensive and important now and will continue to be in the years immediately ahead. To accomplish this vast program we recognize the importance of the co-operative development and maintenance of efficient two-way channels of information and understanding between the school and the home.

One of the purposes of a sound public relations program is "to improve the partnership concept by uniting parents and teachers in meeting the educational needs of children."¹ And, as a further step, there needs to be serious concern for the aspects of human relations² in this democratic group process.

A parent-teacher partnership is possible only if the teacher and the parent share a common concern and a mutual respect for each other's contributions in the educative process. As soon as parents and teachers arrive at the realization that the future of our culture depends upon what our homes, communities, and schools do to our children, then will the ideal

¹American Association of School Administrators, Public Relations for America's Schools, (Twenty-eighth Yearbook, Washington, D.C.: The Association, 1950), p. 14.

²Willard S. Elsbree and Harold J. McNally, Elementary School Administration and Supervision, (N.Y.: American Book Co., 1951), chapters 24 and 25.

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of parent-pupil-child relationships become a reality. The teacher's role in arriving at this relationship is to guide and develop the growth of the "whole child" not solely of his "mind".

One of the elements or dimensions of this total teacher-parent-child relationship is the presence or absence of conflict between these individuals, or how they "get along" together. Attention is focused, herewith, not individually upon teachers, parents, and pupils as such, but particularly upon the relationship between them.

There is the personal and the professional relationship. This study has been of the personal aspect of this relationship — its contribution toward the accomplishment of the over-all goal in the primary grades. By personal relations I mean the feeling tones, the emotional reactions that surge back and forth, restlessly and unceasingly, between any two persons who are thrown together in daily, face to face contact.

One of the compelling laws of sound public relations is that both teacher and parent involved in a personal relationship shall benefit from that relationship. The fact that teachers and parents have one common interest — the welfare of children in a democratic society — is a priceless asset in maintaining an effective program of school-community relations; for, after all, the program is essentially a program of relations among people. If care is taken to observe democratic principles including, above all, consideration and respect for the opinions, rights, abilities, and feelings of others, it is more than likely that fine relationships between teachers, parents, and pupils will result.