



School-Home Communication Essentials for ESPs

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Coffee, Water, and Wine

Early to Bed. Early to Rise.

Dogs

Journalist, Family Engagement Director,
Author, Mommy

School-Home Communication
Expert/Consultant/Coach

Looking for: My phone!!!



Evansville, IN

“I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it until it begins to shine”

-Emily Dickinson

Shasta Rosales, 40+



Laramie, WY

Coffee, Water, and Moscow Mules

Learning is a gift, sharing your
knowledge is a power.

Animals

Educator, Trainer for NEA ESP
Professional Growth, ESP Micro-
Credentials Developer of Curriculum
Modules, Mom

Facilitator/Coach/Advocate

Looking for: My Keys!!

*“Education is the most powerful weapon
which you can use to change the world.” -*

Nelson Mandela

ESP Leadership Competency

- Communication
 - Build and execute an integrated communications strategy that drives the mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals of the association.
- Level 1-Foundational

ESP Professional Growth Continuum

- Professionalism Standard:
 - Communication
 - Ability to effectively listen and communicate (written and verbal) with a diverse audience including students, parents/guardians, staff, visitors, and community.
- Level 1-Foundational, Proficient, Advanced

The Eight Universal Standards

- Communication
- Cultural Competence
- Organization
- Reporting
- Ethics
- Health and Safety
- Technology
- Professionalism

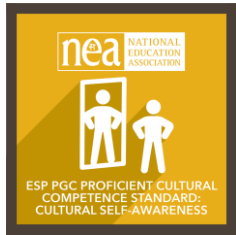


NEA Learning Management System Online Communication Course for ESPs

Check it out!

- Self-paced online Course
- *Not* a Prerequisite for Micro-Credentials
- <https://neapartnera.learnupon.com/store/3377889-universal-standards-for-education-support-professionals-communication>

ESP PGC Micro-Credential Stack



A newly revised ESP PGC Micro-credential Stack has been created, take a look!



Building Winning Teams- Paraeducator Teacher Teams stack. All of the MCs in this stack have something to do with Communication. Check out: **Understanding and Applying Communication Styles for Team Success.**

Available on the ESP Certification Bank Portal:

<https://nea.certificationbank.com/ESP>.

Today's Objectives/Goals

- Leave with an understanding of the critical and essential role you play in family engagement and school-home communication.
- Be able to understand the importance of creating a welcoming environment and how that factors into communication and relationship building.
- Be able to recognize and identify both effective and ineffective communication by analyzing examples.
- Leave with an understanding of the importance of tone and ability to analyze the tone of communication.
- Be able to use some simple tips to handle challenging situations with families.

~~Today's Objectives/Goals~~

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“I was floating in a tunnel toward a very bright light and then a voice told me I had to go back and finish listening to the presentation.”



**You are Super
Communicators!**



#1-You can create powerful first impressions.

The “Halo” Effect

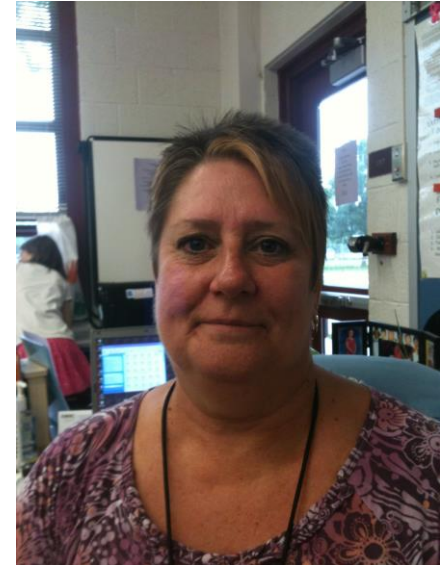
A cognitive bias wherein an initial positive impression of a person, brand, or product **unconsciously influences our perception of them as a whole.**



#2-You often have more interaction with parents and caregivers.

#2-You have more interaction.

- You may be the only school staff member families see on a regular basis.
- You often interact with families daily.
 - Your interactions “bookend” the start and end of the day for families.
- Your frequent informal interactions can build strong relationships.





#3-You are often more approachable.

#3-You are often more approachable.

- Families are less likely to be intimidated.
- Families are less likely to be afraid of power dynamics.
- Families often have positive perceptions of ESPs.



#4-You have knowledge of school AND home.

#4-You have knowledge of school AND home.

- You see students in their “natural habitat.”
- You see changes in families and family situations.
- You understand school jargon and policies.
- You, yourself, often bring an outside perspective to education.

Remember...

Parents won't tell school staff if they don't understand!

Parents won't tell school staff if they feel overwhelmed or are struggling.

But they may tell you!

And...

Remember...

It's important to share what you know!



The Role of ESPs

- Spend a few minutes **reading *The Importance of ESPs.***
- **Circle at least five ways** the education support professionals helped build bridges with Mrs. Jones.
- **Share your thoughts** in the chat.



Bridging the Communication Gap with Families

Step #1 Welcome Families into the Education World.



Why is it Important to Be Welcoming?

Effective communication is at the center of a memorable customer experience.

32% of users would stop interacting with a brand after a single unpleasant touchpoint.

*****3 out of 4 will share if they've had a positive experience.**

<https://cxm.co.uk/communication-with-customers-five-essential-factors/>

Creating a Welcoming Environment

- Acknowledge and speak to families.
- Smile and greet parents and caregivers by name.
- Be friendly and helpful.
- Provide clear directions/help parents get where they're going.
- Express thankfulness.
- Remember to *Breathe*.

Remember...

There are no redos for first impressions.

First impressions require extra action to change.

Step #2 Serve As a “Translator” for Families.

Translating for Families

Communicate conversationally, as if you are talking to your best friend.



Formal/Conversational Style

“Please contact the school to request assistance.”

Formal Style/Conversational Style

“Please contact the school to request assistance.”

“Please reach out if you need help.”

Formal Style/Conversational Style

“I’m writing to inform you of the fact that your student has been non-attendant for five days of school.”

Formal Style/Conversational Style

“I’m writing to draw your attention to the fact that your child has been non-attendant for five days of school.”

“Just a note to let you know your child has missed five days of school.”

Formal/Conversational Style

“Martricia School understands there are instances when a student may need assistance with meal funds, therefore the following guidelines will apply...”

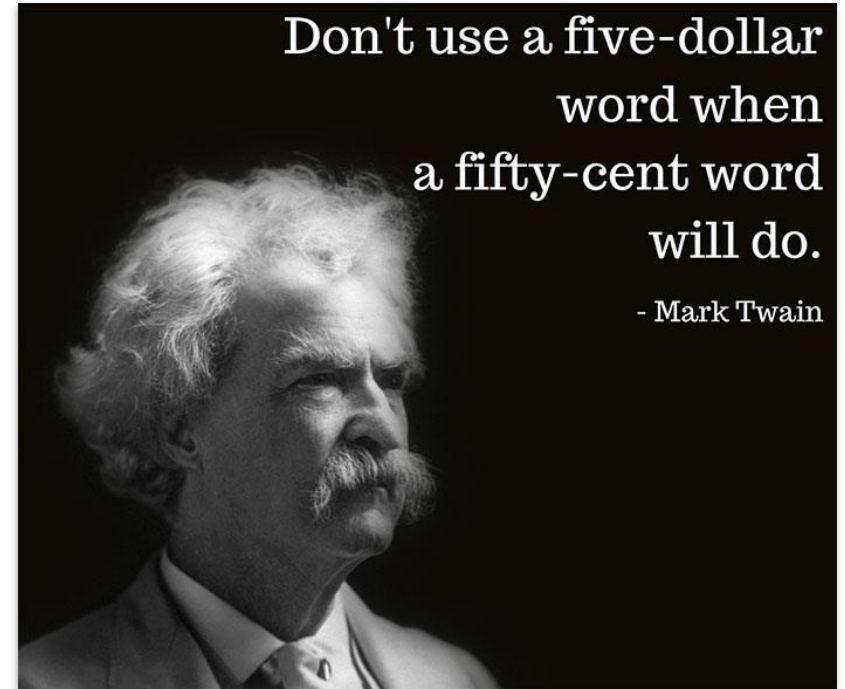
Formal Style/Conversational Style

“Martricia School understands there are instances when a student may need assistance with meal funds, therefore the following guidelines will apply.”

“If you need help with meals, please let us know. Here are the guidelines for meal charges.”

Translating for Families

Be aware of
five-dollar
words and
acronyms.



We are excited to share that we will be ***implementing*** the PSAT 8/9 to a ***subset*** of our 8th grade students this spring. These students were selected based on their strong ***academic*** records. Your child was one of those selected! The PSAT 8/9 test the same skills and knowledge as the PSAT/NMSQT in a way that is ***appropriate*** for 8th grade. This ***assessment*** establishes a ***baseline*** of college and career ***readiness*** as students enter high school and provides valuable information to plan and guide the student beyond high school into ***postsecondary*** education.

Five-Dollar Word

Fifty-Cent Word

Assessment	Test
Data	Information
Referral	Sent to the principal's office for behavior
Academic Standards	What the state expects your child to know and be able to do at the end of a grade year.
Guardian	Caregiver

Inclement???

AT&T LTE 11:46 AM 100%

Tweet

 **Michael Essien - EssienEdu...** ...
@MichaelCEssien

There's inclement weather in Portland. Sending my thoughts and prayers to @VP_Vikings . I hope all is well with your students, families, and staff. Wishing everybody safe travels to and from school today 🙏❤️🙏

9:09 AM · 4/11/22 from Alameda, CA · [Twitter for Android](#)

1 Retweet 2 Likes

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

- Read the Five Dollar words on the screen.
- Translate them into a Fifty Cent word or words.
- Type your “translation” in the chat.

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Excluded

“Your child will be excluded from school.”

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Excluded <i>"Your child will be excluded from school."</i>	Your child will have to stay home.

Five-Dollar/Fifty-Cent

Truant

“I’m calling to let you know your child has been truant.”

Five-Dollar/Fifty-Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Truant <i>"I'm calling to let you know your child has been truant for two days."</i>	I'm calling to let you know hasn't come to school the past two days.

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

Postsecondary

“This week, we are discussing postsecondary possibilities with your student.”

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

5 Dollar Word	50 Cent Word(s)
Postsecondary <i>“This week, we are discussing postsecondary possibilities with your student.”</i>	“After high school possibilities.” “college, career, and job opportunities”

Five Dollar/Fifty Cent

The simpler the words, the more easily they are translated and understood in other languages.

Avoid Acronyms

“As a requirement of our **CAP, EERC** and **PBIS** Indiana staff will be visiting our district to attend a **DLT** meeting in the coming months. The purpose of the meeting is to support our district’s efforts to address **disproportionality** and will last approximately two hours. The agenda for the **DLT** meeting will at a minimum include a review of our **CAP, root cause analysis** and any relevant data as well as the needed resources and supports from the **EERC** and **PBIS** Indiana.”****

*****actual email received by Patricia*

Is this helpful?

COMMON SPECIAL EDUCATION ACRONYMS

ACR	Annual Case Review	SI	Speech Impairment
ASD	Autism Spectrum Disorder	SLD	Specific Learning Disability
AT	Assistive Technology	SLP	Speech Language Pathologist
BIP	Behavior Intervention Plan	TBI	Traumatic Brain Injury
BDDS	Bureau of Developmental Disabilities Services	TOR	Teacher of Record
BLV	Blind or Low Vision	TOS	Teacher of Service
CC	Case Conference	OI	Orthopedic Impairment
CCC	Case Conference Committee	PBIS	Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports
DD	Developmental Delay	PLEP	Present Levels of Educational Performance (also often referred to as Present Levels)
DHH	Deaf or Hard of Hearing	PT	Physical Therapy; Physical Therapist
ED	Emotional Disability	VR	Vocational Rehabilitation (also often referred to as Voc Rehab)

Behavior Intervention Plan

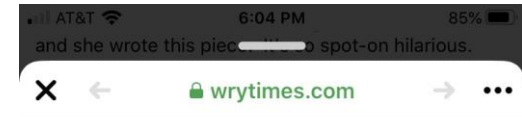
“A BIP, or behavior intervention plan is the plan we will work on together to make sure your child has the support they need to be successful. For example, when your student has completed all of their assignments in class, they can have free gym time.”

Remember...

Pointing out the five-dollar words and acronyms you hear can be powerful reminders to the other educators around you.

Translating for Families

Streamline your
information.



Woman Drowns in School-Related Emails

August 7, 2020 — by ELISA

ZURITSKY



Send

Communicating for the “Ear”

The “Ear”
represents your
attention span.



Communicating for the “Ear”

- The “Ear” can only digest about one fact per sentence.
- The “Ear” quits listening when it takes too much effort.
- The “Ear’s” attention span is getting shorter and shorter.



Streamlining Information

- Pare down information into what is essential.
 - Leave out information you can share with parents at a later time.
 - Leave out unnecessary details.
- Put most important information at the top.
- Remember parents read information on their phones.

Remember...

When we simplify our communication, we're not "dumbing it down." The information is as complex as ever, we're simply conveying it in a way that is understandable.

Remember...

The better you understand the information,
the better you will be able to bridge the
communication gap with parents and
caregivers.

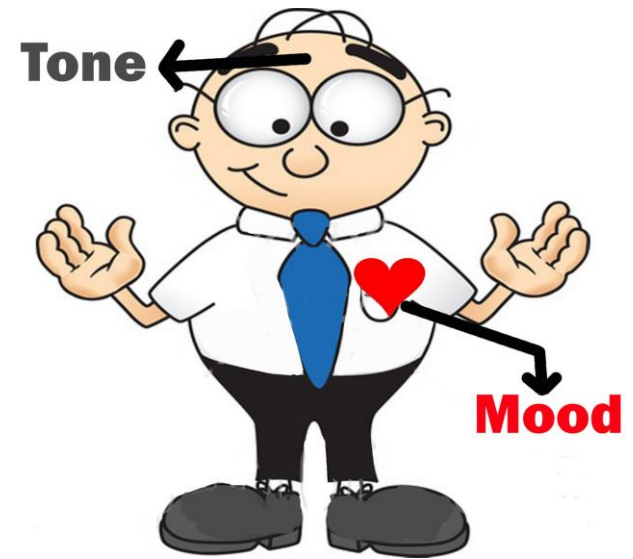
Step #3

Be aware of your nonverbal
communication-tone.

What is Tone?

Tone is the attitude of a speaker or writer toward a subject or an audience. Tone is generally conveyed through the choice of words and phrases.

Tone brings out an emotion of in the receiver of the information.



Tone Starts with You

- How do you feel about the parents you are communicating with? Do you believe they want the best for their children?
- How do you feel about what you are communicating?
- How is your day going?
- How do you feel in general? Are you doing your self-care?

Rewriting for Tone

- Put on your “parent hat.”
- Read the following examples of communications.
- Think about the tone of the messages.
- In the chat, type one or two words to describe the tone of the messages.

Facebook Post

Information for Monday, February 28th: Town hall meetings are held prior to regularly scheduled school board meetings at the JCCSD Administration Building from 5:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. Elected trustees will be present to have conversations with any interested individual who has completed and submitted a registration form. This has proven to be a successful process for the Board to receive public comment and engage with our stakeholders. Click here to submit a town hall registration form for Monday evening:

<https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLSc69cfQOsb.../view/form...>

From Formal to Friendly...



Facebook Post

Do you have questions or comments for the members of the School Board? If so, come to the next School Board Town Hall! School Board Town Halls are held before every school board meeting. The next one is set for this Monday from 5:00 p.m. to 5:25 p.m. at the Administration Building on Walnut Avenue. **Remember, if you want to speak, you'll need to sign up ahead of time. Here's the link:**

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Bussing Information

School districts have broad authority to control student conduct and adopt all rules reasonably necessary to maintain proper discipline among their students. Behaviors not covered will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis by the Manager of Transportation and will fall within the guidelines of each school's student handbook.

From Curmudgeonly to Congenial



Bussing Information

We know you want your child to be safe and we do too! That's why we have rules and regulations that we need students to follow when they are riding our school buses. Please partner with us and help teach these behaviors to your child. We will work with you if any issues happen during your child's time riding the bus.

Bussing Information

School Districts have broad authority to control student conduct and adopt all rules reasonably necessary to maintain proper discipline when transporting students. Behaviors outside of those rules will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and will fall within the guidelines of our program handbook.

We know you want your child to be safe and we do too! That's why we have rules and regulations that we need students to follow when they are riding our school buses. Please partner with us and help teach these behaviors to your child. We will work with you if any issues happen during your child's time riding the bus.

Parent Email

Benjamin did not turn in his Yellow folder last week on Friday. He did not bring it to school today either. I have given him his assignment for this week. It is a Venn diagram where he needs to compare the skeletons of two different animals. I wanted to let you know about his late lesson.

From Stern to Supportive



Parent Email

Hi!

I hope you're well.

I wanted to let you know Benjamin did not turn in his yellow folder last week for me to grade and he didn't seem to have it at school today.

Is everything okay?

Email me back when you get a chance and let me know.

Thank you,

Parent Brochure

Benjamin did not turn in his Yellow folder last week on Friday. He did not bring it to school today either. I have given him his assignment for this week. It is a Venn diagram where he needs to compare the skeletons of two different animals. I wanted to let you know about his late lesson.

Hi!

I hope you're well.

I wanted to let you know Benjamin didn't turn in his yellow folder last week for me to grade and he didn't seem to have it at school today.

Is everything okay?

Email me back when you get a chance and let me know.

Thank you,

Improving Tone in Conversations

- Breathe before responding.
- Check your emotions.
- Take off your “educator/school hat.”
- Think about the receiver of the information.
- Bring a fresh start to every interaction.

Improving Tone in Conversations

- Feel friendly and calm.
- Speak slower and softer, with less force.
- Be sensitive and aware of cultural differences.
- Express respect and thankfulness.
- Remember your goal.

Improving Tone in Writing

- Breathe before responding.
- Feel friendly and calm.
- Read your work back to yourself.
 - How does it make you feel?
- Have someone else read your work.



Remember...

Our goal is not “to be in charge”, “to win”, or
“to be right.”

It’s to build relationships that will result in
strong partnerships and student success.

Last Step!!

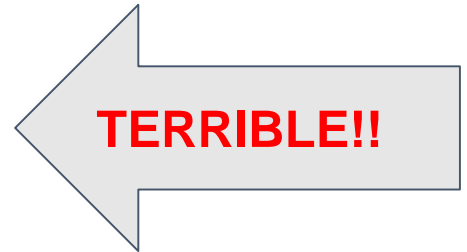
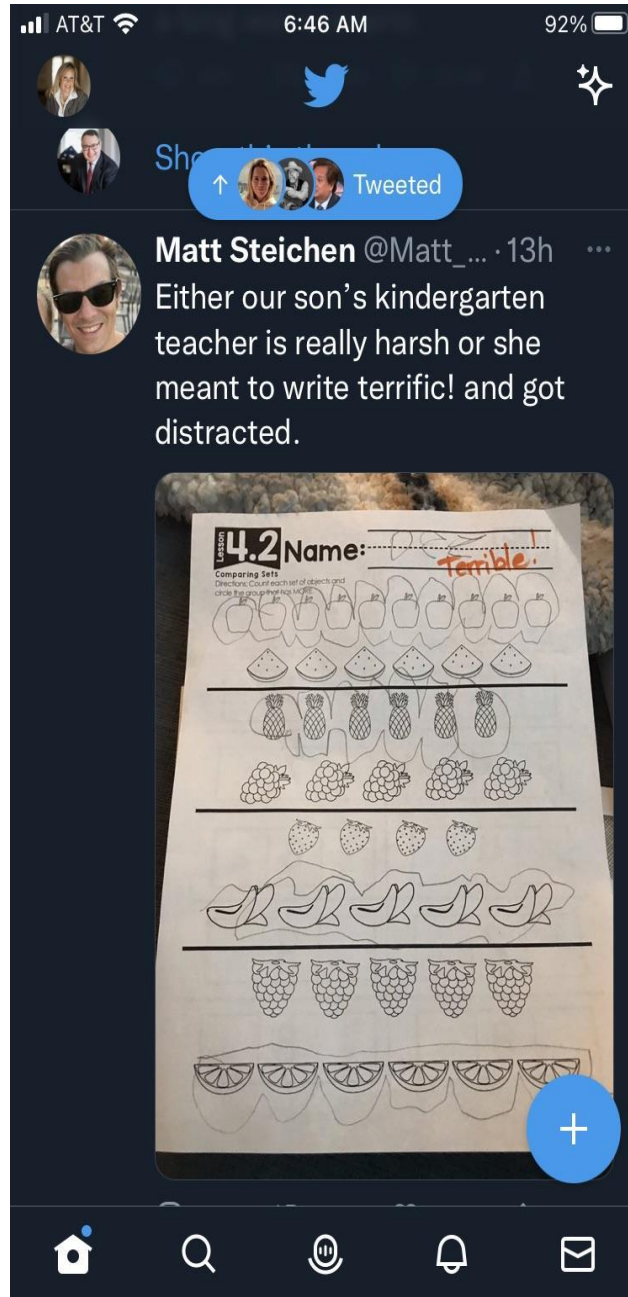
Prepare for Challenging Situations

They are bound to happen....



"Angry parents on lines 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5."

One of Those Days...



Challenging Situations

Reframe the Conversation.



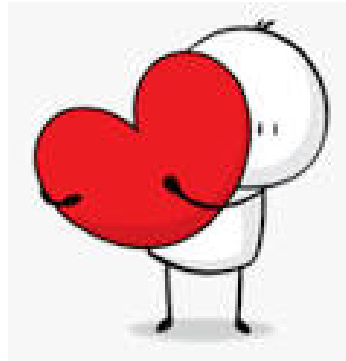
Challenging Situations

Be a Thermostat, Not a
Thermometer.



Challenging Situations

View Anger as an Expression of
Love.



Remember...

Relationship building and de-escalation skills used with students can and should be used with families.

Many times parents and caregivers have also experienced generational trauma and stress.

Remember...

If you can communicate effectively using your words, information, tone, and body language, you can build the respectful relationships that make these challenging conversations easier.

Your Leadership is Key



Your Leadership is Key



- Put on your parent hat.
- Think about how you might feel.
- Pay attention to the ways you and your school communicate.

Your Leadership is Key



- Create a standard of welcoming behavior.
- Communicate the importance of the families' role to other staff.
- Work with teams in your building.

Your Leadership is Key

- Stay informed.
- Don't be shy, ask questions.
- Do your self-care.
- Ask for feedback from parents and caregivers.
- Reflect on interactions and conversations.
- Show yourself some grace.



Never Forget..

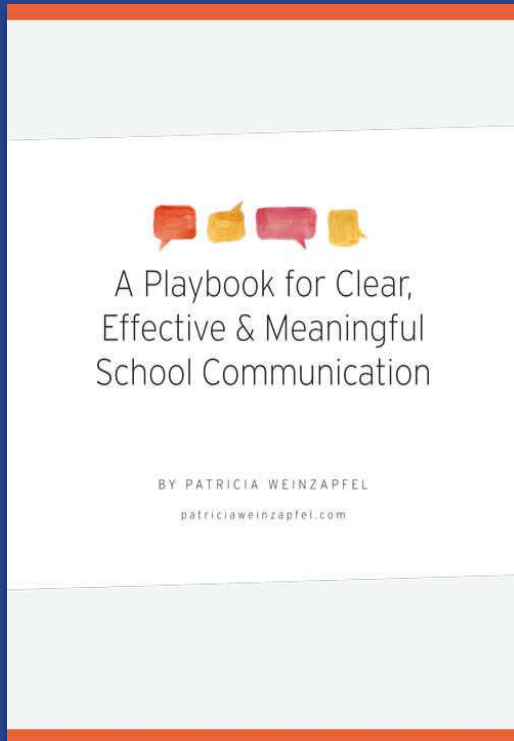
- You absolutely ESSENTIAL when it comes to communicating the building relationships with families.
- You are already naturals when it comes to understanding your families.
- You, and your work are changing the lives of children and families and...

Creating a
kinder, more
respectful
world.



Good School- Home Communication is Everyone's Responsibility!







Contact Information

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