

Together

By Maren Schmidt

In my chiropractor's examining room, there is a poster of two hands reaching for a handshake with the title "Together". The poster says:

OUR JOB

- See you as an individual
- Respect your privacy and your time
- Provide a comfortable office
- Explain procedures
- Monitor and report progress
- Show you ways to get and stay well
- Offer state of the art chiropractic
- Refer to specialists if needed
- Charge a fair fee for our services
- Honor individual health goals

YOUR JOB

- Want better health
- Get involved
- Keep appointments
- Follow advice
- Ask questions
- Seek answers
- Expect results
- Stay optimistic
- Pay your bill
- Tell others

For me this poster clearly communicates the roles of doctor and patient. Upon further reflection, I see that this message is valid for any professional relationship or organization. An organization, as Stephen Covey defines it, is any group of two or more people working for a common goal.

Excited about how this poster states clear roles and expectations, I revised it to reflect the relationships between school and home, or teacher and parents.

OUR JOB

- See you and your child as individuals
- Respect your privacy and your time
- Provide comfortable facilities
- Explain procedures
- Monitor and report your child's progress
- Show you ways to aid your child's development
- Offer state of the art education
- Refer to specialists if needed
- Charge a fair fee for our services
- Honor individual educational needs

YOUR JOB

Want a better school community for all
Get involved
Be on time
Follow advice
Ask questions
Seek answers
Expect results
Stay optimistic
Pay your tuition and/or taxes
Tell others

Having played many roles in education—student, teacher, parent, school administrator, principal, school owner, tuition check writer and taxpayer—I realize that when I missed one of the jobs on this list, problems followed. When someone didn't do their part within the organization, trust and satisfaction in the relationship were damaged or destroyed.

In the roles we play in our educational organizations, as either service providers or consumers, let's encourage the development of clear and concise expectations for the tasks that need to be addressed to assure our group's success.

Our Job. Your Job. It's easy to look at these lists and for everyone to know if expectations are being met. When there are rough spots in a relationship, (remember, if we're human there will be problems) each party can look at the lists to help define the problem, discern contributing factors to the situation, and create possible solutions.

Roles and expectations clearly stated from the beginning can help us make our organizations successful for all our students, our families, our school staff and our communities.

A successful doctor needs cooperative patients. Patients need an understanding doctor. Successful schools need collaborative families. Families need effective schools. Together, we can do it.

About Maren Schmidt: Maren founded a Montessori school and holds a Masters of Education from Loyola college in Maryland. She has over twenty-five years experience working with children. Maren writes the weekly syndicated newspaper column, Kids Talk. She is author of two books, *Understanding Montessori: A Guide for Parents* and *Building Cathedrals Not Walls*. Maren currently serves as an OMA board member.

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