

# CLASSROOM TLC: Teachers Lawyers Children in Partnership



## TIPS FOR SUCCESS

1. **Communicate with your partner.** Your partnership will never get off the ground if you don't! If you can't reach your partner after the initial orientation, don't give up! If your partner does not return your call or e-mail, it does not necessarily mean they are not interested. It may just be a matter of timing.
2. **Teachers:** There are things about your students, classroom and school that your lawyer partner will need to know prior to the first visit. Among these are:
  - ⇒ Characteristics of the students: grade level, age, number in class, special needs students, level of verbal skills.
  - ⇒ Curricular Fit – how will this presentation fit with topics the students have previously covered? How have you prepared the students for this particular visit?
  - ⇒ Logistical Considerations: Size of classroom, length of time available for presentation, availability of special equipment.
3. **Lawyers:**
  - ⇒ Relax and be yourself! Use humor when appropriate. Treat the students with respect. Speak in lay person's terms but don't oversimplify. Students will appreciate that someone they perceive to have an important role in the community has chosen to spend time with them.
  - ⇒ Prepare your presentation. Don't wing it. Avoid lecturing whenever possible. Encourage everyone to participate.
  - ⇒ Share personal experiences when appropriate but avoid telling "war stories" as they frequently present a negative image of the legal system.
  - ⇒ Choose material that is relevant to the students' lives. The teacher should review any handouts you may wish to use.
  - ⇒ If your schedule forces you to cancel a visit, give the teacher as much notice as possible and re-schedule the visit as soon as possible.
4. **Remember this is a "partnership".** Both the lawyer and the teacher should be involved in the lesson. The teacher can assist the lawyer by raising clarifying questions or issues that have been neglected, helping to focus a rambling discussion, handling any discipline problems, participating in a role play, etc.
5. **Debriefing the lesson is important.** The teacher can help the students review what they learned after the visit. The lawyer can begin a subsequent visit with a brief review of what the students learned in a previous visit.