



CONFERENCE TIME

8 TIPS FOR AN EFFECTIVE PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

Your child's report card has been sent home, and it may be time to have a conference with the teacher. Formal conferences usually occur only one to two times a year so you want to make the most of this face-to-face time with your child's teacher. This is an excellent opportunity to discuss your child's progress, strengths, and any challenges that need to be addressed. View conference time as a learning opportunity for you and the teacher as you work together to help your child have a successful school year. Here are some suggestions to prepare for an effective parent-teacher conference:

1

Write your questions ahead of time. This will lead to a more focused conference, and you'll remember to ask your most important questions.

2

Communicate with your child prior to the conference. Does your child have questions or concerns for you to share with the teacher?

3

Prioritize your agenda. Conference time is limited, and teachers often have conferences planned throughout the day. Address your most important concerns first.

4

Advocate for your child yet be receptive to the teacher's feedback. Promote an open line of communication so the teacher can share strengths as well as any challenges your child may be having in the classroom.

5

Ask to see completed work and tests. Many teachers will have a portfolio of work samples to share with you during the conference.

6

Take notes during the conference. It's often difficult to remember all the details once the conference has ended, and these notes can help you follow through on any areas that need to be addressed.



Leave with a plan to support your child, and determine how communication will continue. How will you receive updates from the teacher? How will you share information with the teacher? Many teachers prefer e-mail communication as the busy schedule does not allow for lengthy phone calls during the school day. If there are concerns about your child's performance, how will extra support be provided in the classroom as well as at home? Leave the conference with a plan of action.



Ask what you can do to support instruction in the classroom. Parental involvement is an important factor impacting a child's success in school, and parents can make a difference by volunteering their time and talents.

Remember you do not have to wait for the school's official conference day to meet with your child's teacher. If a concern arises before the next conference day, take the initiative in contacting the teacher to schedule a meeting. Deal with any potential problems early, and maintain an open line of communication.

The goal of an effective parent-teacher conference is to convey and learn information that will help your child experience success. In a developmentally appropriate manner, share what you learned at the conference with your child, and follow through on the plan of action. Maintaining an open line of communication between school and home throughout the entire school year provides the opportunity for you to help your child succeed!