



Parent Student Teacher Conferences

The parent/teacher conference is an opportunity for parents, teachers and students to discuss and evaluate a student's progress.

At the conference

Parents

- Remember that interview time is limited, usually about 10-20 minutes.
- Come prepared with your questions or concerns.
- Avoid too much small talk.
- Discuss serious concerns immediately.
- Ask to see your child's work. Request specific examples to illustrate any concerns the teacher has outlined.
- Seek clarification and summarize as you go.

Here are some questions for you to consider:

- What are your expectations for my child?
- Is my child meeting grade expectations?
- Is my child working to his or her fullest potential?
- How is my child's self-esteem?
- Does my child contribute/participate in class?
- Does my child complete the assignments?
- Does my child make good use of class time?
- Does my child seek extra help, if needed?
- What extra help is available?
- Does my child show good behaviour in class?
- What can I do at home to support learning in the classroom?

The conference is a good opportunity to thank your child's teacher. Mention any projects or schoolwork your child has enjoyed or is excited about.

Should I go?

If your children do very well in school, do you still need to attend the conference? Yes! Your attendance will show your children that what they do in school is important and that you take pride in their good work.

Parent/teacher conferences can take place anytime during the school year. But please make an appointment, so your child's teacher can prepare for the conference in advance.

Concerns

Sometimes you won't feel satisfied with the outcome of a conference.

- If you are not clear about what the teacher has just told you, ask for an explanation.
- If you are concerned about your child's performance at school, avoid blaming or accusing anyone, but make it clear that you want to explore all options for your child.

- If you suspect your child has difficulties that are going to be ongoing, write up a short summary of the conference while the interview is still fresh in your mind.
- If you find yourself losing your temper, keep your cool. Avoid insulting or attacking the teacher personally. Treat others the way you would wish to be treated.
- If you are upset, try to communicate non-defensively. For example, you could say, "I'm concerned about John's marks in mathematics. I wonder if you can give me an idea why he's doing so poorly."
- If you feel the interview is not productive, make an appointment for a follow-up conference. If concerns are not resolved to your satisfaction at that conference, make an appointment with the principal.



Student Led Conferences

Many schools conduct student led conferences. During these sessions, students accept responsibility for reporting their progress at school to their parents. With their teacher nearby to support them and to clarify and answer specific questions and concerns, students lead the interview, presenting a portfolio of their work to their parents. Studies suggest that student led conferences help participants to set goals, promote open communication and encourage the child to take responsibility for his or her own learning.

If you are participating in a Student Led Conference...

Parents

- Remember that your child has put a great deal of time and thought into preparing for the interview.
- Realize that this is an opportunity to view learning experiences through the eyes of your child.
- Listen attentively to your child as he or she presents the portfolio of selected work.
- Question and encourage whenever appropriate.
- Ask specific questions and give positive feedback.
- Focus on what your child can do and has achieved successfully.
- Compliment your child on a job well done.

Students

- Welcome your parents to the school and introduce them to your teacher.
- Relax.
- Show, read and explain to your parents the items in your portfolio.
- Discuss the goals that you set for learning.
- Ask your parents for comments, either verbal or written.

Sources

1. Communicating in Conferences. Parent-Teacher-Student Interaction. Paul G. Friedman
2. Help! School Starts in September. Joan Craven
3. Parent-Teacher Conferencing. Joseph C. Rotter, Edward H. Robinson, Mary Ann Fey
4. Parent-Teacher Conferencing. Gerda Lawrence and Madeline Hunter
5. Partners in Learning. The Alberta Teachers' Association
6. Student-Led Teacher Parent Conferences. Nancy Little and John Allan

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