

Parent-Teacher Conferences:

*A Checklist
for Success*

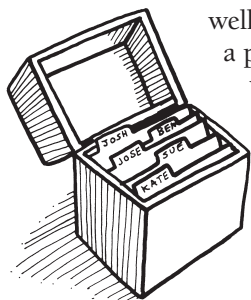
*for
Teachers*



What's the key to a successful parent-teacher conference? *Planning and preparation. Make the best use of the time you have with parents by putting together a plan that helps everyone. Here are some ideas to get you started.*

Before the conference

- ✓ Keep a file box with an index card for each student. Make a note when a child does something well or when you see a problem. Keep individual file folders with samples of class work, homework, and tests.
- ✓ Send parents a pre-conference questionnaire to complete. *Note:* For ideas, see "Parent questionnaire" to the right.
- ✓ Prepare an outline of what you want to cover during the conference.



as talking to the guidance counselor or reading specialist, discuss how you will follow up.

- ✓ Work with the parents on an action plan to help their youngster succeed at home and school. Set goals for the child's achievement.
- ✓ Give parents something to take home, such as an art project, a completed story, or a letter you asked the students to write to their parents about the classroom.



- ✓ End on a positive note. Summarize what the student has achieved and what he does well. Encourage parents whose children are struggling by restating the action plan and goals.

At the conference

- ✓ Begin by talking about the student's strengths in academic, behavioral, and social areas.
- ✓ Discuss any problem areas. Be as upbeat as possible, suggesting ways to address the problems.
- ✓ Share work samples with the parents. Point out how the work shows their child's strengths and weaknesses.
- ✓ If parents have questions or concerns that require further action, such

After the conference

- ✓ Send notes or e-mails to parents thanking them for coming to the conference. Reiterate how important their involvement is to their child's success.
- ✓ Call or e-mail parents as needed to follow up on specific points in the action plan. Reschedule further conferences if necessary.

Parent questionnaire

Having parents answer questions before the conference helps you find out how they think their child is doing and what concerns they have. Here are some sample questions:

- What do you think your youngster's strengths are? His weaknesses?
- What school topics does your child talk about most? What does he seem most excited about?
- What subjects or assignments seem most difficult for your child?
- How do you think your youngster learns best? By listening or watching? By working alone or with others?
- Do you have any special concerns about your child's progress, learning skills, or social skills?
- I will know your child better if I learn more about his outside interests. What does he like to do after school? Is there any subject, sport, or activity he is passionate about?
- What could I do at school to help your youngster succeed?
- What is the best way for us to communicate: written notes, phone, e-mail, or in person?

Note: We chose to use a boy in this report, but the examples apply to both boys and girls.

Home & School CONNECTION

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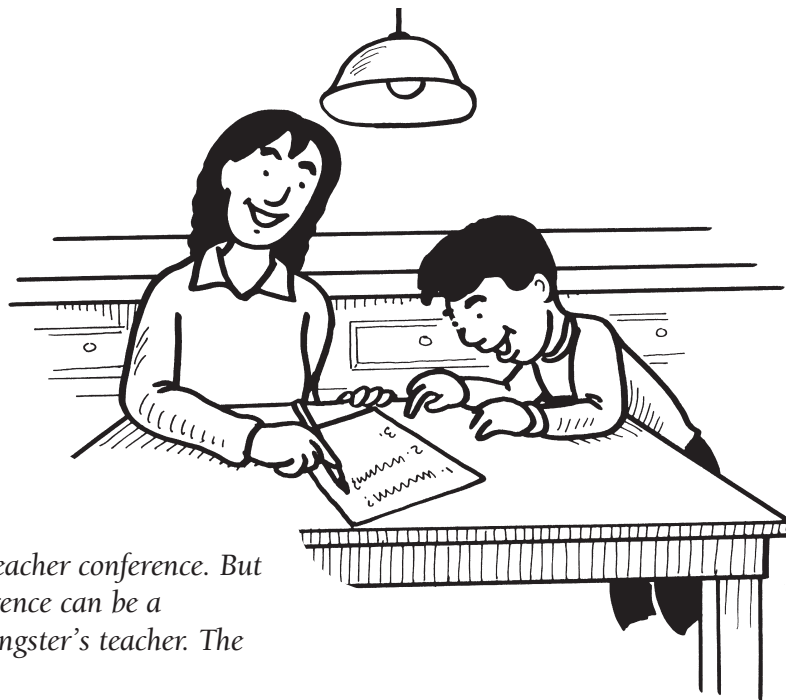
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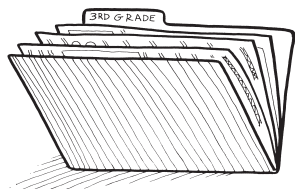
*for
Parents*



It's that time of year again. You're invited to a parent-teacher conference. But don't panic! Plan ahead, and you'll find that this conference can be a first step toward cooperation between you and your youngster's teacher. The happy result? A more successful year for your child!

Before the conference

✓ Keep a folder about your child with items like work samples, notes from conversations with teachers, and standardized test results. Look over your youngster's recent work to review his grades and see where he loses points.



✓ Ask your child about school. What are his favorite subjects? What is he having trouble with? How does he get along with his teacher and the kids in his class?

✓ List your child's strengths and weaknesses.

✓ Jot down things about your child that will help his teacher know him better, such as his hobbies or anything causing him stress.

✓ Make a list of the questions you want to ask. *Note:* For ideas, see "Questions to ask" to the right.

At the conference

✓ Make a positive impression. Walk in with a smile, and be on time. *Tip:* It's best not to take younger children along.

✓ Listen carefully to what the teacher tells you. If you don't understand something, ask her to explain.

✓ Ask questions about your child's academic progress, social relationships, and behavior.

✓ Work with the teacher to develop an action plan to help your youngster succeed. List things you and your child can do at home to help him do his best in school.

✓ Plan for follow-up with the teacher. Would she prefer that you write notes, call, or send e-mails?

After the conference

✓ Write the teacher a note or an e-mail thanking her for the information and her suggestions.

✓ Discuss the conference with your child. Tell him what the teacher said, and outline the action plan you and his teacher came up with.



✓ Put the plan into motion. Monitor your youngster's class work, homework, behavior, and mood. Stay in touch with the teacher.

Questions to ask

Wondering what questions to ask your child's teacher? Try these for a start:

- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in your class?
- Is my youngster performing at grade level? Is he working to the best of his ability?
- Does my child need special help in any subjects? Does he need help with his learning or test-taking skills?
- Are you concerned about any learning problems?
- Is my child completing class work and homework on time? Does he take part in class discussions?
- How does he get along with the other kids? What activities does he participate in during recess? Who does he play with most often?
- What can I do at home to help my youngster succeed?

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