

GETTING THE MOST OUT OF PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

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- Conference time is just around the corner for some parents, and it may already be here for others
- These types of conferences are traditionally the most formal means of communication between parents and teachers, and they should be seen as providing a rich opportunity to build communication and understanding between the home and school
- These conferences could also be very stressful and anxiety producing for many parents
- The working parent may have to rush to a conference early in the morning before work, take time off at lunch, or wait until the end of a long day to meet with the teachers
- Other parents may be anxious about meeting with their child's teacher because of their own school-related experiences as a child
- This stress and anxiety can lead to strained or shortened conversations between the teacher and parent which will not benefit them or the child
- To reduce this tension and stress, it is important for parents to come to a conference well-prepared so that the time can be spent efficiently

Possible Questions to Ask Include:

For preschool-aged children:

1. How is my child progressing developmentally?
2. Does my child do really well in some areas that I can reinforce at home?
3. Does my child need special help with anything?
4. Does my child make friends easily?
5. Does my child participate in group activities?
6. What is my child like during the day?
7. What can I do to continue the learning process at home?

For older children:

1. What is my child studying this year?

2. What aspects of school does my child appear to enjoy the most?
 3. What are my child's best/worst subjects?
 4. How well does my child get along with classmates?
 5. Has my child completed assignments regularly?
 6. Does my child willingly participate in class activities?
 7. Does my child follow directions?
 8. Have you noticed any changes in my child's behavior(s) during the year?
 9. What tests has my child had or will my child have this year?
 10. What do the test scores tell me about my child's progress?
 11. How does my child handle taking tests?
 12. Does my child need help in any academic area or need to be referred to school specialists?
 13. How much learning do you require be done independently?
 14. What expectations do you have for children in your classroom?
- It is important that children feel that their teacher and parent(s) are working together on their behalf
 - A good partnership between the home and school will help make sure that children get the best education possible
 - If there is a problem that is identified, ask for specific examples of the behavior or the classroom work so that you and the teacher can work together towards resolution
 - What YOU have to say is just as important as what the teacher has to say
 - You are the expert on your child's personality – what makes them anxious, motivates them, makes them feel proud
 - You have information about your child's strengths, talents, hobbies and interests that can help the teacher – information the teacher needs
 - SHARE IT