

Parent-Teacher Conferences



Parent-Teacher Conferences are this week. This is a great time for parents and teachers to collaborate on how best to help your child. By this time you and your child's teacher should have a good working relationship. Hopefully you have been communicating throughout the year by email, phone, face-to-face conversations, etc. Now you have a 15 minute conference and you need to make the most of it. You can spend time going over lots of student work and talking about things you already know, or you can get right down to the nitty gritty, and find out what you need to do between now and the end of the school year to best help your child.

My suggestion is to give the teacher about 4-5 minutes to go over whatever he or she planned, and then if it is not getting down to what you really need to know, you need to politely redirect the conference. What are some good ways to do that? It comes down to asking good questions and getting specific answers. Here are some good questions to ask: *Is my child performing at grade level? What are some specific goals that we can set for my child to reach by the end of this school year? What can **we** do to help my child achieve those?*

You may want to focus on just one or two goals. Anything more than that can be overwhelming to your child. Pick a subject, say math or reading, and try to agree on some specific goals with the teacher. Then come up with a specific and reasonable plan that will help your child attain those goals.

Remember to take a notepad with you to the conference. Have the questions you want answered written down. When you leave the conference make sure you have your child's goals written down and a brief outline of the plan to achieve those goals. If you run out of time (remember the conference is only 15 minutes), you can follow up with a phone call, by email, or if necessary by scheduling an additional conference.

To be really effective, you want your child to "buy into" the plan. Hopefully it is not something that you are *doing to* your child, rather it should be something that you are *doing with* your child. It will be your job and the teacher's job to sell this plan to your child. The more they are motivated to do it, the better their chances of success.

Yours in Christ,
Jim Makey, Principal