



Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-Teacher Conferences are next week. This is an important opportunity for both parents and teachers to collaborate on how to better educate their child/student. Here are some ideas that will help make the conferences a good use of both your time and the teacher's time.

What To Expect: The conference should focus on some things that the child is doing well, and then on some things that the child can do better. Expect to see work samples and evidence of how your child is doing in school. The conference should be a collaborative process, so be prepared to both listen and talk.

Do Your Homework: Before you go to the conference, take a look at your child's homework, tests, and any other school work you have received or collected. Write down your questions as you think of them. Think about your child's strengths and challenges. Are there other factors that could be affecting his or her education that you should share with the teacher? Your insights can help the teacher in working with your child at school.

The Conference: The teacher should lead the conference, but he or she should give you the opportunity to offer your own insights and ideas, and ask for any questions you have. Don't forget to bring your questions in a written format. Chances are that you won't remember them if you don't have them written down. Be sure to ask questions such as: *Is my child performing at grade level? How is he or she doing compared to the rest of the class? What do you see as his or her strengths? How could he or she improve?*

The End Of The Conference: Walk away with a plan on how you and the teacher can help your child to improve. The plan should involve parent and teacher. If you have agreed to take a particular action, write it down. This is especially important if you have to attend conferences for more than one child.

Please remember, conferences are only 15 minutes. Try to start on time and end on time. That means that you need to get right to the point, and stay on topic. If you find that the 15 minute conference is not long enough, please do not stretch it to 20 or 25 minutes. Instead, ask if you can schedule another time to finish the conference.

Follow Up: Don't forget to follow up with the teacher after a few weeks. The next time we have scheduled parent-teacher conferences is not until the middle of February. If something isn't working, don't wait until then to talk to the teacher. Call, email, or schedule a time to meet again.

We may not be able to prepare the future for our children, but we can at least prepare our children for the future.

— Franklin D. Roosevelt