



Family & Educator Partnership



Tips for Parents and Teachers Preparing for Parent-Teacher Conferences



Teachers have conferences with parents at least once each school year, and sometimes more often. Usually the first grading period, whether it is a quarter or trimester involves a conference between parents and teachers. In order to make the most of conference time, what can parents do to prepare?

Understand class expectations

Most teachers either visit with parents before school begins or send something home that gives a general idea of what is expected of the students for the year. Parents should be given an idea of what content is being covered for the year (subjects) how the school day would look (schedule of activities/classes) and student behaviors that are expected (may be in the school handbook.) If you don't have that information by the second week of class, you might want to send a note to school or e-mail the teacher or guidance counselor to ask for it.

Talk with your child

Ask your son or daughter how school is going and if he/she has any questions or concerns. Let him know that you will be talking with his teacher(s) and ask if there is anything in particular he would like you to talk about. Find out from him what he likes about his school day and what he doesn't like so much. Ask him what he thinks his teacher will say about him and his work at school. If he doesn't attend the conference with you, tell him you will let him know what is discussed after the conference.

Make a list

Think about your conversation with your child as well as the questions you have for the teacher. Write out a list of questions and topics you would like to discuss at the conference. Do you have questions about special/ extra activities that might occur during the year? Homework expectations... how often and how many hours should you expect your child to spend on it each day? If you anticipate absences from school for family trips, what arrangements should you make ahead of time? What is the best way to connect with the teacher if you have questions or concerns? What can you do at home to help your student? Think about the information you think a teacher should know about your child, and put those on

the list. Maybe your daughter loves to dance, or ride horses and in order to know your daughter, the teacher should know that. Are there health issues that you want to share with the teacher or things that are happening at home?

Be an active participant

Take your list to the conference so that you can check it to make sure you remember everything you want to discuss. Be an active listener and keep an open mind while the teacher is sharing information and ideas. Look over your child's work and ask questions if there is anything you don't understand. If the teacher uses unfamiliar words, ask for clarification. Let the teacher know you appreciate the role she is taking in helping your child learn and grow.

After the conference

Review the discussion with your child. If you have other questions that arise after that conversation or as you review your list, contact the teacher, guidance counselor or school principal to get the rest of your answers. Students always benefit from teachers and parents working together, and parent-teacher conferences are a great place to start.

Contact FEP Coordinators: Sandy Kraschel, 641-355-4242/ 800-392-6640
or April Wooldridge, 641-485-9166/ 641-753-3564/ 800-735-1539 for additional information.



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