

Preparing for Parent Teacher Conferences Tip Sheet and Survey

- **Start with invitations and outreach.** Parent teacher conferences aren't much use to teachers or families if no one shows up. Starting at least two weeks before conferences, make sure you send home a written invitation to every parent explaining when and where conferences are and laying out any next steps for scheduling conferences. Follow-up with families, especially those you are most concerned about seeing, with a phone call, text, or email reminder.
- **Ask families in advance what they want to talk about.** Parent teacher conferences should be a 2-way dialogue between parents and teachers. In order to determine what to talk about in your limited time, ask families to tell you about their questions, concerns, and interests. Have families suggest topics or subjects that they feel are most critical to discuss. Feel free to use the elementary conference preparation survey on the next page, or create your own.
- **Create an agenda and outcomes or key areas of improvement for each conference.** This may sound like a lot of work, but conferences will be more productive if you and families know what you are trying to accomplish and how you are trying to accomplish it. Because conferences are so short, you should only have 1-3 outcomes or areas of improvement per conference and a very limited number of agenda items. (See Sample Agenda and Outcomes for Parent Teacher Conferences). You can begin the conference by sharing the outcomes and agenda with families and asking if there is anything they want to add or change.
- **Assemble necessary data and materials for each conference.** Prior to conference day, review the agenda and outcomes for each of your conferences and gather any data or materials you will need to accomplish these outcomes. For example, if one of your conference outcomes is: *Parents will be able to explain Tiajanae's progress in reading and how many levels she needs to grow by March*, bring a copy of Tiajane's latest reading assessment and the leveled books she eventually needs to read. If another outcome is *Parents will be able to ask Tiajanae 3 reading comprehension questions each night*, bring a list of sample comprehension questions, or better yet, make magnets with sample questions out of laminated paper and magnetic strips. Store this information and/or resources in file folders or gallon-size bags for each individual student.



Conference Preparation Survey

Dear _____:

Thank you for signing up for a parent-teacher conference. Your conference is scheduled for _____ and will take place _____. I am very excited to meet with you and discuss _____ progress. Since we have so many very important things to talk about, please answer the below questions so we can make the best use of our time. This also helps me figure out what tools and resources I should bring to our conference. Please return this form to me no later than ONE DAY before your conference date.

How do you think your child is doing in ____ grade? How is he/she doing in reading? Math? Writing?

How do you keep track of your child's progress? Do you use _____, etc?

What do you think your child does really well in school? How do you know?

Where would you like to see your child improve? Why?

Do you feel comfortable helping your child with homework or reading? What tools or lessons do you need to better be able to assist him or her?

Do you have any suggestions for me to better assist your child at school or better prepare you to help him or her learn at home?

Please write down additional issues or questions you wish to discuss at the conference.

Thank you! I look forward to seeing you and your child next week!

Sincerely,