

PREPARING FOR Parent-Teacher Conferences

DURING THE SCHOOL YEAR teachers may invite you to come to parent-teacher meetings (also called conferences). The conference gives you a chance to talk with your child's teacher(s) about your child. You can also ask for a conference any time. When parents and teachers talk with each other, each person can share important information about the child's academic progress, talents, and needs. This tip sheet suggests ways that you can make the most of parent-teacher conferences, to best serve your child.

Before the Conference

- Schedule a time to meet. If you can't go at the scheduled time, or if you need more time, ask the teacher about other times that you can get together.
- If you need an interpreter, please notify the school in advance.
- Review your child's school work, grades, and progress reports, and talk with your child about his or her progress in school.
- Ask your child how he or she feels about school and if he or she has any questions.
- Tell your child that you and the teacher are meeting to help him or her.
- Prepare a list of 3 to 5 things you want to share with the teacher and 3 to 5 questions to ask during the conference.
- Visit Edline to review your student's grades online and encourage your student to do the same. If you need assistance with Edline, please contact your school.
- If your child has a 504 Plan or IEP, please review and bring a copy to the conference.
- Consider including your student in the conference.
- Think about ways you would like to be involved in your child's learning so that you can discuss them with the teacher.

During the Conference

- Be on time or early for the conference.
- End the meeting on time. Other parents probably have a conference after yours.
- Relax and be yourself.
- Take notes.
- Stay calm.
- Listen to what the teacher has to say and ask the most important questions first.
- If your child receives special services, ask about your child's progress in those classes.

After the Conference

- Review your notes.
- Talk about the conference with your child.
- Talk about the positive points, and be direct about problems.
- Tell your child about any plans you and the teacher created.
- Continue to review your child's school work, grades, and progress reports.
- Promote daily leisure reading at home.
- Keep in touch with the teacher during the school year.

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GENERAL QUESTIONS

- How well does my child get along with classmates?
- Have you observed any special interests or talents my child may have?
- What do you see as his or her strengths? How could he or she improve?
- What are the ground rules for completing homework, turning in assignments, and being prepared for class?
- What tests have been given to my child this year? What do the scores mean?
- Aside from report cards, what are the best ways to keep up to date with my child's progress?

Elementary School

- Is my child reading at grade level? Can you show me books that are the right level of difficulty for my child and recommend books that he or she may enjoy?
- How much time each school day does my child spend working on each subject? How much time should he or she spend working outside of school?
- My child is struggling to keep up. What support can the school offer my child to make sure he or she does not fall behind?
- What things do you have my child doing to improve performance?
- What can I do at home to help my child do better in school?
- My child is doing well in school. What extra enrichment or support can be provided to ensure his or her continued learning?

Middle School

- How is my child doing in math? If my child is in a grade-level or advanced math course, does he or she have the opportunity to take the challenge items on the end-of-unit assessments?
- What subjects does my child enjoy most? How can we build upon those strengths?
- What courses will help my child be prepared for high school?
- My child is struggling to keep up. What support can the school offer my child to make sure he or she does not fall behind?
- Does my child regularly complete assigned homework?
- What after-school programs are available for my child?

High School

- What are the requirements for doing well in your class, and how do you assess students' work? Can you show me examples of student work that meets the class requirements?
- My child is struggling to keep up. What support can the school offer my child to make sure he or she does not fall behind? What support is the school providing my child to ensure progress?
- What are the course objectives? How do these objectives lead to the overall goal for the course or grade?
- My child would benefit from taking more challenging courses. What courses will help my child be prepared for college or the workplace?
- What extracurricular activities are available for my child to participate in?
- What resources and supports are available to my help child apply to colleges?