



Parent-Teacher Conference Strategies

The key to a successful conference lies in good communication and careful planning.

- 1 **Remember first impressions are formed in the first few seconds.**
Be the first one to make eye contact, smile, walk toward the parent and extend your hand.
- 1 **Try to make the parent feel comfortable.**
Remember that some parents are not comfortable in the school setting.
- 1 **Don't make assumptions about names and relationships.**
Ask if you are unsure.
- 1 **Keep a record of each conference.**
A simple sign-in sheet works well.
- 1 **Plan ahead.**
Make sure you have the necessary materials (grades, best work, portfolios, etc.) with you. You might need to think about entertaining those younger siblings as well.
- 1 **Open on a positive note.**
Avoid making assumptions about the parent's attitude.
- 1 **Try to keep to the time schedule.**
If the parent needs more time, arrange for a follow-up time.
- 1 **Ask parents what their concerns and questions are right away.**
This can alert you to possible miscommunications, or potential confrontation.
- 1 **Have suggestions.**
Be able to suggest, provide samples, or direct the parent(s) where they can access home activities that will support the educational program.
- 1 **Avoid being defensive.**
Emphasize how student behavior and progress is determined primarily by the student.
- 1 **Turn the other cheek.**
It's unusual to run into abusive or hostile parents, but it can happen. Hear out the parents in as pleasant manner as possible. Remain calm. If necessary, refer them to the principal or counselor.
- 1 **Don't take it personally.**
Often the parents are really upset at the child. Sometimes the problem is beyond your control.
- 1 **Conclude the conference on a positive note.**
Thank them for coming, send a thank you note or mention it in your newsletter.