

Tips for Talking With Teachers

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Whether your child is the class genius, the class clown, the class bully or somewhere in between, it is helpful to review some tips and suggested questions for talking with your child's teachers. Both parents and teachers want what's best for the child. So, be willing to work together to benefit the child.

General Tips for a Successful Parent/Teacher Conference

1. Ask your child if there is anything that he/she would like you to discuss with the teacher.
2. Write down and prioritize questions you want to ask the teacher.
3. Arrive promptly or a few minutes early.



Both parents and teachers want what's best for the child. Be willing to work together for the child's benefit.

4. Begin with positive comments about the teacher or classroom.
5. Avoid lengthy discussions of topics that are not related to the purpose of the conference.
6. Be open-minded to suggestions from the teacher.
7. Keep your emotions under control.

8. Take notes about what has been discussed to share with your child.
9. Express appreciation for the conference.
10. Do not stay beyond your allotted time.

Questions to Ask About Academics at Parent/Teacher Conferences

1. What skills and knowledge will my child be expected to master this year?
 - What will my child learn this year in key subjects like math, science and English?
 - How will students know the academic standards they're expected to meet?
 - What projects or assignments are planned to help students master key skills?
2. How will my child be evaluated?
 - What kind of information do you use to evaluate students?
 - How do you know if a student is ready to move on to the next grade?
 - How are grades determined in your classroom?



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3. What can I do to stay more involved in my child's academic progress?

- What can I do at home to complement what is happening in the classroom?
- How can I know on a daily basis what homework has been assigned?
- How can I support your efforts in implementing higher academic standards?



4. How do you accommodate for differences in learning?

- What if my child is a slow learner and falls behind?
- What if my child is a fast learner and is bored?
- Are there additional resources available for students who need more help?

What to Do If a Teacher Contacts You Regarding Your Child

1. Make time to talk – If you can't give the teacher your full attention right then, schedule a more convenient time for both of you to talk later.
2. Take notes – An unexpected phone call in the midst of your daily activities can make it difficult to remember everything that was discussed. Write down the things you talked about with your child's teacher.
3. Do not interrupt – Be sure you let the teacher fully explain the reason for the call before you comment.
4. Share your thoughts and ideas – You know your child better than the teacher. Offer creative suggestions and strategies to help the situation.
5. Do not expect a quick fix – If there was a quick fix, the teacher would have already done



it rather than calling you. Take time to think about the teacher's concern and talk with your child about the issue. You may need to have a face-to-face conference with the teacher.

6. Do not place blame – Try not to get defensive. The purpose of the conversation is to help your child, not to assign blame. The teacher needs your support to help resolve the situation.

When a teacher contacts you regarding your child, make time to talk, or schedule a more convenient time for both of you to talk later.

Questions to Ask the Teacher If You Have Social Concerns About Your Child at School

1. Does my child have any friends at school?
2. Why do you feel my child is having problems socializing with other children?
3. Is there anything you can do to help my child feel more comfortable around peers?
4. What could I do at home to help my child get along better with classmates?
5. Could the school counselor help my child improve socialization skills?

Tips for Parents to Help Their Children Be Better Socialized

1. Try to make your home a friendly place that attracts children.
2. Invite a classmate to your home to play with your child.
3. Have your child participate in sports, music or clubs as a way to learn skills and make friends.
4. Let your child see you in social interactions so they have an appropriate role model.



References

Family Education Network, <http://school.familyeducation.com>
National Education Association, <http://www.nea.org>

Printed by University of Arkansas Cooperative Extension Service Printing Services.

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