

Family Matters

Parent-Teacher Conference Checklist

Follow these steps to forge a successful partnership with your child's teacher.

Before the Conference: Plan Ahead

- Agree to a meeting time that's convenient so you won't feel rushed or distracted.
- Ask your child if there's anything he wants you to discuss with his teacher or anything he wants you to know beforehand. This will help you focus your questions and reduce the possibility of any unpleasant surprises. Plus, you can communicate to the teacher anything that's on your child's mind. Emphasize to him the positive focus of the meeting so he doesn't become overly worried about it.

At the Conference: Key Questions to Ask

- What information and skills will my child learn this year and what are the standards she'll need to meet?
- How do you handle different learning abilities and styles?
- What seem to be my child's favorite subjects? His strengths and weaknesses?
- Does she participate in class? Try hard?
- How are classes structured? Is he assigned to a group? How is the group determined?
- Are evaluations and grades based on tests, attendance, homework, portfolios, discussion, or another means? If my child falls behind, how will you handle it?
- How does my child get along with other students in the classroom?
- What kind of support should I be giving her at home? How can I learn about homework assignments?
- Have you noticed any worrisome behavior?
- If there's a problem, when, where, and what's happening and how can it be fixed?

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After the Conference: Follow Up

- Tell your child about the conference and explain (if appropriate) what was discussed.
- If there was a problem discussed, keep in touch with the teacher regularly so you can monitor your child's progress.

As your child improves in his weaker areas, make sure you express your appreciation!