



# Parent & Teacher Conferences

Gaines Elementary School: 989-271-8329 or 810-591-1075

We believe that the parent and school partnership is a very important part of student success. We believe that nobody knows your child like you do, and this is one of the most important reasons for forming a partnership between home and school. It is also one of the reasons why taking part in Parent-Teacher Conferences is so crucial to your child's success in school.

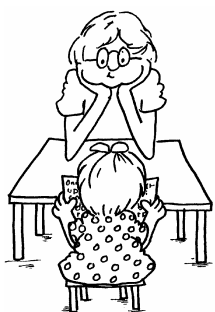
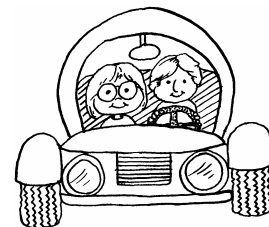
Conferences help you keep track of your child's progress at school. Conferences can help you catch school problems early, and with the help of the teacher, find solutions to those problems. Conferences also help you truly get acquainted with the school and your child's teacher.

Conferences with parents help our teachers learn more about your child and will also help when the teacher works with your child. The teacher can also use conferences as a time to suggest ways for you to help your child be successful in school. Hopefully, you and the teacher will form a trusting relationship that will help your child build his/her self-esteem and learn the value of doing well in school.

Here are some tips on how to make the most of your conferences with your child's teacher.

**PLAN THE TIME** For working parents and those with very young children, it can be tough to find time for conferences. One answer might lie in using vacation time at work, or perhaps your employer will let you make up the time or allow a coworker to cover for you. If necessary, swap baby-sitting favors with a friend. If transportation is a problem, ask the school to help you find a ride. If you totally run out of options and have no alternative, you can arrange a telephone conference with the teacher.

**BOTH PARENTS SHOULD ATTEND** If both parents can't attend one session, then perhaps parents can take turns attending. When both parents are involved, the child feels the support of both parents. Single parents might get a relative or close friend to attend with you if you prefer. Remarried parents might invite their new spouses in order to help foster a blended family unit. It is helpful if non-custodial or shared-custody parents participate, especially if the child spends time in both homes. If necessary, the school will hold two separate conferences, or one for both parents with their new spouses.



**INVOLVE YOUR CHILD** Ask your child if he/she wants you to discuss something special at the meeting. Find out what your child likes and dislikes most about school, what is easy and what is hard, and how school could be better. Remember: you need to share the results of your meeting with your child; both the good and the bad news.

**MAKE A LIST OF QUESTIONS BEFORE THE CONFERENCE** Jot down the issues you want to discuss with the teacher. Here are some examples:

“how does my child get along with the other students”, “does he/she participate in class”, “does he/she follow the classroom rules”, “what are his/her strengths and weaknesses as a student”, “is progress taking place and is it steady”, and “how can I help”?

**SHARE INFORMATION WITH THE TEACHER** Tell the teacher about major events at home, both positive and negative, such as: a new baby, a medical condition, the death of a loved one or pet, a separation or divorce or remarriage, a job change, new residents in your home (grandparents, step-siblings, etc.), or money problems. The teacher will treat the information with confidentiality and will be able to respond appropriately to your child when these events have an impact on school (and they usually do).

**HAVE A COOPERATIVE ATTITUDE** Your child benefits from knowing his/her teacher and parents are working together to help him/her succeed. If your child has serious problems at school (academic or social), it is imperative to participate in the meeting in a calm manner. If tempers flare, neither you nor the teacher can concentrate on developing a joint plan of action to solve your child’s problems. If the problems are not resolved to your satisfaction, you may want to request a follow-up meeting with staff specialists or the principal.

**IMPROMPTU CONFERENCES CAN HELP TOO** Make appointments for meetings with the teachers at times other than P-T Conferences. Many problems can be solved if they are addressed immediately, rather than waiting weeks until the scheduled conference time. These impromptu meetings, along with regular grade reports, and scheduled conferences, will help you keep your child on track all year.

