

What is a Parent-Teacher Conference?

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Parent-Teacher conferences are scheduled to be an exchange of ideas about your child's activities, habits, experiences, and achievements.

While parents receive progress reports and are encouraged to discuss specific concerns at any time, the parent-teacher conference presents an opportunity for parents and teachers to meet in person at regular intervals to discuss the child's progress.

Parents are requested to make a special effort to meet during these regularly-scheduled times. Nevertheless, special circumstances may require scheduling a conference before school hours or late in the afternoon.

What should parents expect from a Parent-Teacher conference?

- an opportunity to get to know your child's teacher in a relaxed and friendly atmosphere
- an opportunity to hear about your child's progress in academic, social, and emotional development and to learn about strengths and special abilities
- a chance to establish mutual goals with your child's teacher to give additional support in areas needing improvement
- a chance to share important information with the teacher that will be helpful in understanding your child's needs
- an opportunity to ask specific questions about the curriculum

Getting ready for the conference: You can help!

You will receive a confirmation to attend a conference with your child's teacher.

If you have a specific concern you would like to address at your conference, please let the teacher know in advance so s/he can prepare.

To help the teacher understand your child better, you may wish to discuss such things as:

- important experiences that may be affecting your child (death in the family, divorce, a best friend moving away, relationships with family members, *etc.*)
- any special health needs/problems
- after-school activities, special interests and hobbies
- feelings about school
- study habits
- TV habits
- anything at all that could be affecting your child

Remember, it is not necessary to reveal personal information but anything you say will be kept confidential.

Specific areas you may wish to discuss with your child's teacher relating to school performance include:

- classroom activities
- methods of evaluation
- social relationship to peers
- discipline
- homework
- work and study habits
- daily schedules
- competency in basic skills
- attitudes
- strengths and areas needing improvement
- behavior
- initiative

The conference – what to expect

Your child's teacher could discuss your child's school progress, such as:

- ability to do class work
- specific information on performance in academic areas and how your child is doing in relation to class standards
- samples of class work
- the books and materials your child is using
- information on your child's special interests and abilities

The teacher could also discuss your child's social progress, such as:

- relationships with others
- behavior in and out of class

The teacher may share observations that could be helpful to your child (hearing, seeing, *etc.*) or may have suggestions or ideas you can use at home to help your child in school. The teacher may also suggest other resources such as reading material on a topic of interest.

Helpful hints

- Please be on time. Try to follow the schedule that has been set up. If you feel you need more time, ask about setting up another conference at a future date.
- Call the school if a last minute emergency prevents you from coming at the scheduled time.
- Check with your child's teacher about arranging a special conference time if the times and dates are difficult for you and your schedule.
- Please keep in mind the parent-teacher conference is scheduled to exchange information about your child and the curriculum at the grade level. The parent-teacher conference is not the time for a general discussion of educational philosophy nor is it the time to discuss the ability, style or program of another teacher.

When the conference is over

You should have a better understanding of all aspects of your child's school experience. You should know more about your child's:

- academic, social and emotional development
- strengths and areas of growth that are needed
- special abilities
- current performance

Discussing the conference with your child

- The teacher may involve your child in preparing for the conference, perhaps by selecting samples of work to show you.
- Before the conference, you can help relieve any anxiety your child may have by discussing areas you may cover. Afterwards, talk about what was discussed (omitting any information your child may not be mature enough to understand). Be sure to talk about any changes or new plans implemented at the conference.
- Try to be positive! The better children feel about themselves, the better they will do in school.

Benefits of the Parent-Teacher conference

- We believe conferences foster good parent-teacher communications and hope that as a result of your conference:
- You will have a better understanding of all aspects of your child's school experience
- You will have helped the teacher understand your child better, enabling the teacher to meet your child's educational needs

The next parent-teacher conference scheduled for Norman Elementary is Monday, November 24.