

# 10 TIPS FOR PARENTS – MAKING PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES WORK FOR YOUR CHILD

A Parent-Teacher Conference is not intended to be a replay of Open House or Back to School Night. It is an opportunity for teachers to meet one on one with the parents of their students – those who are performing successfully as well as those who are struggling – to establish a true partnership for student success. Together teachers and parents can address concerns and plan for the future. Following are some suggestions to help you make the most of this opportunity.

1. **Talk to Your Child**
  - Find out what your child likes the best and the least about school. Also, ask if there is anything your child would like you to discuss with the teacher.
2. **Gather Input**
  - If your spouse, the child's care-giver, or some other guardian cannot attend the conference, ask for that person's questions and concerns.
3. **Make a List**
  - Before the conference, make a list of the most important topics you want to discuss. The time will go quickly. What are the questions you really want to ask?
4. **Be Ready to Collaborate**
  - The teacher may be just as nervous as you. Keep in mind that you both want your child to be successful
5. **Start with the Positive**
  - Be sure to offer a compliment or a thank you to let the teacher know you appreciate what he or she is trying to do to help your child. Ask what your child is doing well.
6. **Listen**
  - The teacher has your child's best interest at heart. If you hear some bad news, it's because the teacher wants your child to do better.
7. **Ask Questions**
  - Start with the most important things first. You might want to ask: What are my child's strengths and weaknesses? How does my child get along with others? Does my child participate in class discussions? Has my child missed any classes other than the ones I contacted the school about?
8. **Agree on a Plan**
  - What will you do to help your child at home? How will you stay in touch with the teacher? What other programs will you find for your child?
9. **End on a Positive**
  - Review what you've discussed. Restate your plan. If another meeting is needed, set it up now..
10. **Discuss the Conference with Your Child**
  - Stress the good things that you discussed, but be honest about any problems identified. Assure him or her that you and the teacher care.