

Get Ready for.....

The Parent-Teacher Conference

A school conference is a great opportunity for parents and teachers to learn more about students. You can both use the time to share important information to help your child succeed in school.

The key to a successful conference, parents and teachers agree, is two-way communication. By exchanging information, parents and teachers can set the stage for a great school year.

TALK WITH YOUR CHILD

Before you attend the conference, spend a few minutes talking with your child. Tell him or her that you need help preparing for the conference. You might:

- Ask your child what he or she would like you to talk about with the teacher.
- Ask your child what he or she thinks the teacher will say.
- Ask about the things your child likes and doesn't like, problems and successes.
- Let your child know that after the conference, you will discuss what the teacher said.

THINK ABOUT QUESTIONS YOU'D LIKE TO ASK

Prepare some questions in advance. Here are some suggestions:

- What is being covered in this grade or subject this year?
- What are your expectations for homework? Has my child missed any assignments?
- How are my child's work habits? Does he or she use time well?
- Does my child read at the level you would expect for this grade?
- Is my child able to do the math you would expect for a student in this grade?
- Has my child been absent, other than the times when I contacted the school?
- Does my child qualify for any special programs?
- Does my child get along well with others?
- Does my child cooperate in class and follow directions?
- What can I do at home to help my child be more successful in school?

AT THE CONFERENCE

Keep an open mind. Remember that both you and the teacher want to help your child succeed. Your goal is to work for cooperation between you and the teacher. Even if the teacher says something you disagree with, listen to what he or she has to say.

- Ask to see your child's work. There's no better way to see how your child is progressing.
- Ask the teacher to explain anything you don't understand. Every profession has its own jargon which can be hard to understand.
- Sum up what you think has been said. Make sure both you and the teacher agree on any decisions you have made about your child. If necessary, ask to meet again.
- Ask for the best way to contact the teacher. Email? Phone?

WHAT SHOULD THE TEACHER KNOW?

As a parent, you know your child better than anyone else. Share the following information about your child with his or her teacher:

- Favorite subjects
- Outside interests and hobbies
- Any medical or health needs
- Things happening at home that may affect school work—moving, divorce, the birth of a child.

AFTER THE CONFERENCE

Follow up. Stay in touch with the teacher. If you think of a question you didn't ask, contact the teacher. Talk with your child. Stress the positive things the teacher said...and talk about suggestions for improvement. Plan with your child how to carry out these suggestions.