

Getting the Most Out of Your Next Parent-Teacher Conference

The aim of a parent-teacher conference should be for both the parent and the teacher to learn about the child. It's important that we ask questions and also offer information about our children to their teachers. Before you attend the conference, think about what you want to know and what you really want the teacher to know about your child.

Don't try to ask all of these questions - choose the ones that reflect the things you most want to know. Most parent-teacher conferences are limited in time. Prepare a list of questions to ask your child's teacher in advance, using this worksheet as a guide.

CONTENT AND SKILLS

- What should I not be worried about? What is my child really doing well?** Talk about what your child is really good at and what he or she loves—is he reading a favorite book series? Does she love math or singing or baseball? What motivates your child to try hard?
- What is the important content my child needs to learn by the end of this semester?** Ask if the school holds curriculum or learning nights for parents. These are great opportunities for parents to understand what kids should be learning, and to learn about how subjects are taught. The aim of these sessions is for parents to really engage with the work their kids will be doing and to feel more confident about understanding the content and helping with homework.
- Are there areas where my child is behind or having trouble with class work?** Tell the teacher if you have seen your child struggle or get frustrated with homework or if he or she is having any trouble with skills like reading, speaking aloud, or math.

See our guide to preparing for Parent - Teacher Conferences!

Don't forget to ask your child's teacher how you can stay in touch and be supportive throughout the school year!

SOCIAL AND LEARNING SKILLS

- How does my child fit in at school?** Tell your child's teacher about your child: what are his or her strengths? What behaviors do you notice at home? Share the Learning Habits Survey (available in your Raise the Bar Dashboard) if you've completed it.
- Does my child participate well in class discussion and group activities?**
- Does my child take risks or is he afraid to make mistakes?** Your child's teacher will probably have worked with a lot of kids going through the same emotional and social development phases.

HOW TO HELP AT HOME

- What should I do to help my child learn at home?** Talk about what you already do to help your child with learning, and what you could do better. Talk about homework, reading, educational games, etc.
- How can I help when my child is struggling?** How should I help with homework?
- How much time should my child be spending on homework?** Talk about how much time your child spends on homework now and what's expected. What's the best way to balance homework with activities and chores?

IN THE CLASSROOM

- How is creativity encouraged and rewarded?**
- How do you know if my child is on track?** What data do you collect to know this? Test scores are only one way to track progress. Observation, quizzes, and one-on-one or small group chats are others.
- How can you tell if students are being challenged?** Tell your child's teacher if your child finds his or her work too hard or easy. If your child is bored, this is important to share. Your child's teacher can help to work out a plan to keep your child engaged.

Be sure to talk to your child about the conference & come up with a couple of ways to support your child's learning.