

Frequently asked questions about parent conferences

Why is it important for parents to take advantage of parent conference night at their child's school?

- Parent conferences give parents the opportunity to ask questions about what their child is learning in school and how he/she is doing.
- They give teachers the opportunity to ask parents questions that help the teacher gain insight into how to work with the child and improve instruction.
- They benefit the students because the alliance of parents and teachers strengthens the education received by the child.

My child gets good grades in school. Do I still need to go to a parent-teacher conference?

The report card is just a snapshot of how a child is progressing in school. The parent-teacher conference is like a full color DVD. At a conference, parents can see work samples and hear descriptions of their child's academic, social, emotional, and behavioral development. Parents, in turn, can share firsthand what they have experienced at home.

Are parent conferences held when the children are in middle and high school?

Conferences in middle and high schools are different, but they are still happening. In the upper grades, a conference will enable parents to meet with several of the child's teachers instead of just one. The same important information will be discussed, and, in this case, parents have the added benefit of getting the collective feedback of your child's teachers.

Do I have to wait for the scheduled parent conferences to have a parent-teacher conference?

You can have a parent-teacher conference any time of the year. If you have a concern about your child's performance, you need only to give the teacher or counselor a call to make an appointment. Another thing to remember is that conferences don't always have to be face to face. You can always discuss issues over the phone or by e-mail. The scheduled conferences in fall and spring provide a convenient opportunity for teachers to meet with parents, and the meeting could provide parents and teachers the opportunity to set up regular times to meet and/or talk about a child's performance.

How should I prepare for a conference with the teacher?

Some things to consider doing ahead of time are:

- Make a list of things you want to tell the teacher about your child so that the teacher can better understand the child.
- Make a list of what to ask the teacher about your child. Ask your child what he or she would like you to discuss with the teacher.
- If only one parent can attend the conference, ask for your spouse's ideas and suggestions before you meet with the teacher.
- Be on time.