Tips for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Strategies for a successful parent-teacher conference:

1. Arrange the room so you can sit at a table beside a parent or have the conference in a conference room. Do not sit behind your desk while parents sit in student desks.
2. Plan for your conference so that you have information about the child at your fingertips.
3. Make a list of the child’s grades. Otherwise, parents may wish to look at your grade book.
4. Remain flexible, but have a general plan about what you want to cover at the conference.
5. Be friendly in greeting the parent.
6. Check the names of the parents immediately before the conference. Do not assume that the child’s surname is also the parents’ surname.
7. Do not assume that an older parent is a grandparent.
8. Give your own name clearly, then refer to the child you intend to discuss. Some parents may have more than one conference scheduled on a particular day.

Common traps to avoid:
1. Avoid generalities. Parents respond best when they are provided with specific information.
2. Avoid double-talk. Parents appreciate straight talk about the problem their child is having.
3. Avoid amateur psychology. Do not attempt to psychoanalyze when discussing the child.
4. Avoid educational jargon and acronyms.
5. Avoid rudeness. Remain polite even when you feel parents are being antagonistic.