

Tips for a Successful Parent/Teacher Conference

1. Make an appointment. Allow the teacher the courtesy of a scheduled time convenient for all concerned. This allows him or her the opportunity to prepare for the meeting.
2. Be prepared with information that relates to your concern, i.e. homework samples, tests, conference notes, etc.
3. Shake hands when you enter the conference room. Physical contact with others in the room is important.
4. Sit at eye level with the teacher. It is okay to request an “adult” chair when attending the conference.
5. Start the conference off with positive comments about the classroom.
6. State your concern as objectively as possible and use examples.
7. Take notes. This is particularly helpful if another meeting becomes necessary.
8. Ask questions. Repeat information that you are given as a means of clarifying what you have been told.
9. Offer suggestions whenever possible. Don’t just complain.
10. Be an active listener. There are always two sides to every situation. Your perspective may not be the most accurate one.
11. Following the conference, send a note of appreciation for the time expended. In that note:
 - summarize your understanding of what was said and by whom,
 - restate what was agreed upon to do, by whom, by when,
 - ask to be kept informed and mention when you will call to check on progress,
 - reiterate your desire to help in any way, and
 - thank those who attended.

From Parents’ Guide to Teachers of the Gifted, by Sandra Warren, Trillium Press, 1990.