

Parent-Teacher Conference Toolkit for Mentors

Reference: Blank, M.A. & Kershaw, C. (1998). *The designbook for building partnerships: Home, school, and community*. Lancaster, PA: Technomic Press.

Tool: Initial Letter from Educator to Parent to Schedule a Parent-Teacher Conference Sample

Date

Dear _____,
(parents names)
[Never "To the Parents of (*child's name*)"]

Parent-teacher conferences at _____ School are scheduled for the weeks of _____ . Our conference should take about **30 minutes**. Before we complete the schedule, we need some information from you.

Your preferred day of the week: M T W TH F S(am)

Your preferred time of the day: Between 7 and 8 am--before school
 Between 8 am and 12 (noon)--mornings
 Between 12 (noon) and 3 pm--afternoon
 Between 3pm and 6pm--after school
 Between 6pm and 8pm--early evening

Who will be attending the conference?

Will you need--	child care?	Yes	No
	transportation?	Yes	No
	translator?	Yes	No

If yes, for which language?

Thank you for the information. I will get back to you with a scheduled time and some questions for you to think about before the conference. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Teacher's Name

**Tool: Follow-up Letter from Educator Notifying Parent of Conference Time
Sample**

Date

Dear _____,
(Parents name(s))

Our conference has been scheduled for __ (time) __ on __ (date) __. We will be meeting in room __ (place) __ for about 30 minutes. You may park in any space in the lot outside the front door of the school. If this time does not meet with your schedule, please let me know and I will reschedule the conference. The school phone number is _____. You may leave your message and I will get back to you as quickly as possible.

The main purposes for our conference are for us to get to know one another and to find the best ways we can work together for your child. In order for us to be as well prepared as possible, here are some questions you may want to think about before our conference. Feel free to discuss the questions with your child.

Is your child having a good year in school?

What has your child particularly liked about school so far?

Is your child especially excited by or interested in anything happening at school?

What has your child particularly disliked about school so far?

Is your child especially frustrated by or anxious about anything that is happening at school?

*What talents or special abilities does your child have that I could reinforce at school?

*What are your child's special challenges or areas for growth that I could assist with here at school?

Is there anything that I need to know about your child that will help make this year a successful one?

Is there anyway I could be of assistance to you?

Are there any additional questions you would like to ask?

I'm looking forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Teacher's Name

Tool: DETAILS for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences (Reminders for Educators)

Schoolwide

- ✓ It may be helpful to send a brief note home or to make a quick reminder call the day before the conference (especially if it has been awhile since the conference was scheduled.)
- ✓ Signs of welcome
- ✓ Official greeters (older students or parent volunteers)
- ✓ Name tags
- ✓ Directions to rooms or volunteer to deliver parents to the room
- ✓ Room or area designated as “Hospitality Room” for before or after the conference
 - Coffee/drinks
 - Cookies
 - Student art work/music
- ✓ Room designated as child care area
 - Qualified baby sitters
 - Toys for younger children to play with

Each Teacher

- ✓ Post the conference schedule on the door of the conference room.
- ✓ Post a welcome notice. (Example)

*Welcome! I'm glad that you are here. Please have a seat and make yourself comfortable. Have some coffee and cookies if you would like. I will make every effort to stay on schedule. I should be with you at the appointed time. If I am running
late*

TOOL: Checklist for Verbal Communications
Especially for Parent-Teacher Conferences
(to be reviewed prior to conferences and after interpersonal interactions for reflection)

Did I--

- _____ Communicate the purpose of the conference?
- _____ Provide a relaxed atmosphere and establish rapport early?
- _____ Provide opportunities for parents to express their views, opinions, or questions?
What was the approximate percentage of “teacher talk” vs “parent talk?”
- _____ Begin by communicating something positive about the child?
- _____ Share examples of the students’ work?
- _____ Listen intently and attend with energy?
- _____ Maintain eye contact?
- _____ Disregard any (minor) distractions?
- _____ Accurately paraphrase and restate what others were saying?
- _____ Ask for clarification and confirmation when necessary?
- _____ Remain alert and respond appropriately to the feelings and emotions of others?
Read both the verbal and nonverbal behavior accurately?
- _____ Remain calm, if provoked? Avoided confrontation?
- _____ Use nonjudgmental and supportive language?
- _____ Use appropriate and easily understood language?
Avoided jargon and technical terms?
- _____ Maintain or enhance mutual respect?
- _____ Model respect by using names, asking for opinions, acknowledging concerns, answering questions fully?
- _____ Maintain focus on the main objectives/targets of the conference?
- _____ Pace the conference appropriately?
- _____ Use adequate “wait time” to encourage questions or responses?
- _____ Emphasize areas of agreement?
- _____ Emphasize cooperation, collaboration, and problem-solving?
 (“We’re in this together and we can work this out!”)
- _____ Develop simple, reasonable, and focus plans for home reinforcement?
- _____ Avoid offering advice before the parents had opportunities to share their opinions and suggestions?
- _____ Note any needed followup or additional conferences? (and mark your calendar)
- _____ Summarize the main points as a closure to the conference?
- _____ Express appreciation for efforts?
- _____ Gain insights about how to work better with the student and the parents?
- _____ Feel well prepared and satisfied with the outcomes of the conference?

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TOOL: Preparing for the Conference

Teacher Worksheet (Complete before the conference)

Student's name:

Parent(s)' name(s):

Conference date, time, and place:

Purpose of the conference (general progress, specific purpose):

My goal for the conference: (If this is to be a successful conference, what will be accomplished?)

The child's strengths (in general or related to this issue):

The child's challenges (in general or related to this issue):

Examples of student work/portfolio needed:

Additional documentation needed:

Questions I need to ask:

Materials to share:

Other person(s) who should be present:

(Complete after the conference)

Questions asked?

Actions agreed upon?

Needed follow-up (mark your calendar now!)

Next time I would----

Tool: Follow-up Note or Phone Call to Parent(s)

To Those Who Attended the Conference

Date

Dear _____
(parents names)

I was pleased that you were able to meet with me at our recent parent-teacher conference. It is always an important time for me to have the opportunity to meet the parents of my students. I know that together we can make this year a good learning experience for your child. Please let me know if you would like to continue our discussion at another conference. I'll look forward to seeing you in the future or hearing from you anytime.

Sincerely,

Teacher's name

To Those Who Did Not Attend the Conference

Date

Dear _____
(parents names)

I'm sorry that you were unable to meet with me for our conference on _____ (date). I'll be calling soon to set up another appointment. It is very important that we work out a time that will be good for both of us. I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Teacher's name

Be sure to follow-up with a phone call to parents who did not attend the conference and did not respond to the second notice.