



Parent Teacher Conference Survival Guide

It's that special time of year again, it's time for Parent Teacher Conferences! While these meetings can sometimes be a little intimidating, we've compiled a whole host of resources to help you tackle even the toughest situations with ease.

Tips for Parent Teacher Conferences

- ✓ Be prepared
 - Arguably the most important tip to ensuring successful parent teacher conferences is preparation. Make sure you have adequately prepared for your meeting by gathering data, communicating with parents & students about expectations, and creating a game plan for your more difficult conversations. Check out the free **PLANNING** materials in our **resources** section (page 2).
- ✓ Assume Best Intentions
 - Despite any previous experiences, interactions, or negativity, everyone sitting at the conference table wants to help this student succeed. Make sure you come with specific successes, concerns, and next steps. Be clear and create a plan of action for all parties involved.
- ✓ Listen to Understand not to Respond
 - Practice active listening. Remember that even though you have A LOT of students in your class, the parent sitting across from you has only one student in his/her focus. Listen to their concerns to understand them rather than to respond with quick fixes or arguments. Allowing the family member time to speak uninterrupted can go a long way in building a lasting and positive relationship.
- ✓ Involve the Parent AND Student
 - Find ways to involve the parent & student in the discussion AHEAD of the conference. Send a parent questionnaire home, assign a student goal setting worksheet, or consider changing your approach to utilizing student-led conferencing. For printable materials and guides to student-led conferencing check out the **ENGAGEMENT** tab in our **resources** section (page 2).

Dealing with Difficult Situations

Some conversations with parents are tough regardless of how much you prepare. Here are some ideas of tackling those difficult discussions.

- Reach Out First.
- Invite a Neutral Party (Principal or Counselor if you are nervous).
- Welcome with Warmth.
- Keep Your Cool (Be ready for possible anger).
- Listen Actively.
- Speak in a Low Volume.
- Be Prepared with Ideas for Solutions.
- Involve the Parent in Brainstorming Solutions.
- Create a Plan and Next Steps.
- Check out the **DIFFICULT SITUATIONS** tab the **resources** (page 2) section for more Tips!

Student-Led Conferences

Student-led conferences are a great way to bridge the communication gaps between teachers, parents, and students. In the student-led conference format, students and teachers prepare together and then students lead the conference while teachers facilitate. The group then sits together to review and discuss the student's work and progress. In this way, students are responsible for discussing their own successes. Student-led conference models vary, but the premise is the same: This is the student's moment to share his or her reflections on achievements and challenges. Check the **ENGAGEMENT** tab below for more information.

Video on Student-Led Conferences:



RESOURCES

GENERAL RESOURCES/ARTICLES

- [Edutopia Parent Teacher Conference Resources](#)
- [Reading Rockets Parent Teacher Conference Tips](#)
- [Parent Teacher Conference Guide from Scholastic](#)
- [Tips for Parent Teacher Conferences from Kaplan](#)

DIFFICULT SITUATIONS

- [Making Difficult Conferences Easier \(Edutopia\)](#)
- [Handle With Care Difficult Conferences \(Scholastic\)](#)
- [Dealing With Difficult Parents \(TeachThought\)](#)
- [7 Tips for Difficult Parent Conversations](#)
- [Tips on Active Listening \(Edutopia\)](#)

PLANNING



[FREE Printables for Planning your Parent Teacher Conferences](#)

[To Do List: Before, During, After](#)

FREE Professional Learning

Follow the links below and click on **Parent Collaboration** in the red box on the left.

[Student-Led Conferences: Empowering Students to Own their Learning](#)

This session focuses on the power and benefits of the student conference process. Participants will leave with the tools to implement Student-Led Conference. In addition, the session will address creating a culture that helps parents become a partner in developing positive behaviors in their child. Participants will investigate why students behave in certain ways and how to appropriately respond.

[Building the Parent-Teacher Partnership](#)

The focus of this session will be on how to help every parent be part of their child's learning process. Participants will experience activities to assess their level of true collaboration with school families as they learn about the difference between engagement and involvement of families at their school.

[Examining Our School's Two-Way Communication](#)

Experience the power of establishing and sustaining two-way communication with families as you work on moving communication from a barrage of "what parents must do" to a culture of active listening, shared decision making, and systemic feedback.

ENGAGEMENT



[Student Goal Setting Worksheet](#)

[More Goal Setting Resources](#)

[Student Led Conference \(Edutopia\)](#)

[Student Led Conference Ideas \(Scholastic\)](#)