

2011

# PARENT CONFERENCES

*Preparing & Making Them Meaningful*



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ALL PARTIES CAN HAVE ANXIETY ABOUT CONFERENCES

*“Parents and teachers should try to use the precious minutes of a conference to reach an agreement about a child's strengths and challenges and to unite on the best ways they each can respond to them.”*  
**TIME, Feb. 2005**

## TIPS FOR MAKING CONFERENCES MEANINGFUL

Have work samples available to support your statements



Use the grade as the starting point for a deeper conversation rather than focusing solely on it.



Listen more than you talk.



Assume the best. Instead of saying “Why doesn't he do homework?” you might try “What is his homework routine?”



Stay positive, but do not shy away from constructive comments.

**Never** mention another student's name.



Ask questions. The parent is the expert on this child!



Be specific in your comments.



Summarize the concerns and agreements at the end of the conference to check for understanding.

Stay neutral.  
 Don't judge.  
 Do not engage in anger.

Give resources!

- BEST
- INTENTIONS
- ASSUMED
- EMPHASIS ON
- LEARNING
- HOME-SCHOOL
- COLLABORATION
- EXAMPLES AND
- EVIDENCE
- ACTIVE
- LISTENING
- RESPECT FOR
- ALL
- DEDICATION TO
- FOLLOW-UP
- BE HEARD!

[www.hfrp.org](http://www.hfrp.org)

## The Basics

### Before

- \* Create an inviting space where you can sit and converse
- \* You may want to set up a few chairs outside your classroom for waiting parents
- \* When pickAtime closes, print out a list of ‘Teacher Schedule’ so you can stay organized. Don't forget about group conferences
- \* Note a few talking points for each student so you feel prepared going into conferences

### During

- \* Keep an eye on the time. You want to be respectful of your next appointment time AND be able to have closure to your conference
- \* Balance discussion about the student's strengths and areas of need
- \* Keep notes of any agreements or goals discussed

### After

- \* Follow through with any agreements
- \* If you see a change in the student's progress, let the parent know
- \* Thank the parent for attending

