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# Preparing for a parent-teacher conference

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Research shows that family involvement has a positive effect on children's learning, attitudes about school and aspirations. When families and teachers work together they can make an unbeatable team. Parent-teacher conferences help build that team.

Before the conference:

- ▶ Write down questions you want to discuss.
- ▶ Talk with your child about the upcoming conference with his or her teacher. Ask the child if he or she has any concerns.

Discuss what the child feels are his or her successes, likes and dislikes about school. Ask if there are any problems you should discuss with the teacher.

▶ Be prepared to talk and listen during the conference. What goes on at home affects how well a child does in school. Be sure to let the teacher know about such key events as a separation or divorce, family illness, new baby, death in the family, loss of a beloved pet, etc.

At the conference:

▶ Arrive on time and stay only for the amount of time scheduled for your appointment. If important questions have not

been discussed, ask for a future appointment.

▶ Talk about your child's interests and any special information that he or she wanted discussed.

▶ Make notes during the conference to review with your child.

▶ Ask the teacher for his or her views on needed improvements and ask him or her to explain anything you do not understand.

▶ Summarize your understanding of your child's progress and your child's teacher's comments to make sure you and the teacher are in agreement.

▶ Make sure that you know how to contact the teacher, perhaps by phone or e-mail, and that the teacher knows the best way to get in touch with you.

▶ Follow up on any plan of action agreed to by you and your child's teacher. Stay in touch with the teacher. If you think of additional questions later, send a note or leave a message at the school for the teacher to call you.

After the conference:

▶ Discuss with your child what was said during the conference. Be sure to emphasize any positive comments the teacher made.

▶ Talk with your child about

strategies for improvement in academic areas and about other topics such as discipline issues, school activities that might interest your child, work habits, getting along with classmates - whatever topics were discussed during the conference.

▶ Use this as a chance to praise your child for a project, an activity or just for helping you prepare for the conference and to demonstrate interest in your child's life.

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