

Planning Guide for Parent-Teacher Conferences: For Principals, Teachers, and Families

- ✓ Conferences that are linked to learning and carefully planned provide opportunities for students, families and teachers to enter conferences with shared expectations and an increased ability to work together.
- ✓ Careful planning and consideration of family schedules, available times, available locations, and preferred languages are important to ensure that parent-teacher conferences are productive and effective.
- ✓ Review the tips below for Principals and Teachers. Use the *Conference Tip Sheet for Families* as you plan for conferences.

For Principals

*Ideas for **before** the conferences*

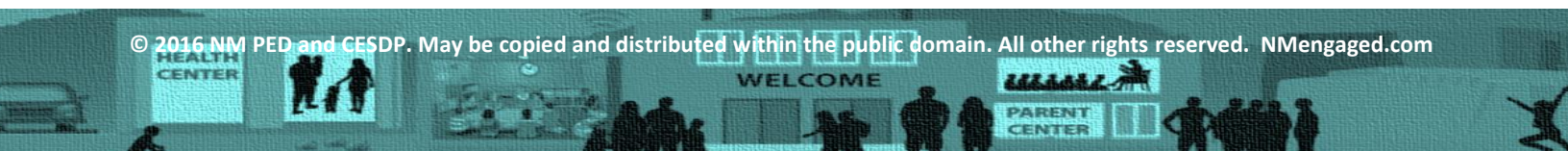
- Promote the importance of communication with families as part of an instruction strategy. Ensure that translators are available for conferences as needed.
- Share guidelines with families and teachers about goals and logistics. Include information about child care, transportation and/or scheduling options.
- Provide professional development with a focus on best practices in conducting conferences and communicating with families.
- Make student data accessible. Let parents know that this information is meant to support learning and growth.
- Create a welcoming school environment. Complete a Family-Friendly School Walkthrough Checklist.

*Ideas for **during** the conferences*

- Be available. Ask teachers if they need any support or help. Offer help in explaining student data or guidance as needed.
- Be visible in the school building and introduce yourself to parents. Communicate appreciation for them being there.
- Make printed material and website available to parents and for teachers to use with parents as needed. Use this time to collect survey information, recruit volunteers and share information about school activities.

*Ideas for **after** the conferences*

- Get feedback from teachers and parents about what did and did not work
- Continuously improve the planning, professional development, and implementation of parent-teacher conferences or student-led conferences.
- Gather momentum and continue to reach out to families with a focus on student progress.
- Work with a team to provide meaningful opportunities for families to get involved that are well publicized and responsive to the needs and interests of families in your school community.



For Teachers

*Ideas for **before** the conferences*

- Send invitations and disseminate information about the conferences. Include information about the timing and goals of the conferences, as well as alternative options.
- Gather student work and input. Be prepared to go over student data, assignments, and assessments. Think about what you would like to learn more about the student from the family.
- Identify and list the key issues you want to discuss about student progress and growth. Consider use of portfolios and/or student-led conferences.
- Send reminders for when and where the conferences will be held. Use the Tip Sheet for Parents prior to the conference through email, texts, backpacks, and/or other methods.

*Ideas for **during** the conferences*

- Plan for side by side seating and privacy.
- Discuss progress and growth starting with the positive. Let families know about their child's ability levels. Help families understand data while highlighting strengths and needs of student.
- Use examples of student work to demonstrate progress and abilities.
- Ask questions and listen actively. Pause and restate parents' words while looking for verbal and non-verbal clues. Invite questions.
- Family insights into the students' strengths and needs, learning styles, and non-school learning opportunities can help you improve your instructional methods.
- Share ideas for supporting learning through activities and strategies families can use at home to help their children grow and learn.
- Seek solutions collaboratively and what you can do together with families to resolve any problems.
- Spend the last few minutes of the conference to discuss a plan for how you and the family will support the student and follow up about progress.
- Establish lines of communication including the best methods and times for both of you. Schedule a way to follow up in the next few months and end on a positive note. Express confidence in the child's ability.

*Ideas for **after** the conferences*

- Follow up with families through emails, texts, notes, phone, and/or other practical methods to thank them for attending conferences and remind them of key points.
- Contact parents who did not make the conference and offer alternative ways to communicate.
- Use this opportunity to recruit volunteers and stay in communication.
- Connect in-class activities to what you know about family cultures, languages, home environments, and student strengths and needs.

Parent-Teacher and Student-Led Conferences A Tip Sheet for Families

Remember that the conferences are a way for you to communicate with your child's teacher regarding his/her success as a student
Review this Tip Sheet as you prepare for a conference with your child and/or your child's teachers.

Before the Conference

Ask your child how she/he feels about school with questions such as:

Is there anything that you would like to talk about during the conference or anything that you would like me to ask your teacher?

Is there anything that you would like to know more about related to your rights as a student?

During the Conference

- Find out how your child is doing with questions such as:
 - Is my child at grade level with his/her reading, writing and math?
 - May I see something my child has written?
 - May I see an example of grade level or excellent work?
 - What are my child's strengths in class?
 - What are my child's weaknesses in class?
 - What do you expect from children in your class (behavior, work habits, etc.)?
 - What can I do at home to support you and my child in school?
 - How can I reach you if I have any questions or ideas on how to help my child succeed in school?
- Ask to see samples of student assignments and assessments. Ask how teachers give grades.
- Share anything about your child that you think would be important for the teacher to know such as his/her strengths, needs, or concerns that you may have.
- Ask what you can do at home to help your child learn. Ask if there are resources, programs, or services in the school community that could also help your child.
- Plan for follow up with teachers, your child, and family. Ask how the teacher will follow up and the best ways to communicate with each other. Ask: Do we need to meet again? When will we meet?

After the Conference

- Review your notes and follow up plans with your child and other family members as appropriate. Maintain a folder with important documents, notes, and school calendar.
- Talk about it with your child. Praise your child's strengths.
- Decide how you will follow through with any plan that you and your child have agreed upon with the teacher.

Padre-Estudiante y Conferencia Guiados por Estudiantes Folleto de Consejos Para Padres

Recuerde que las conferencias son una forma de comunicarse con el maestro/a de su hijo/a acerca de su éxito como estudiante. Repase esta hoja de consejos como preparación antes de la conferencia con su hijo/a y/o el maestro/a.

Antes de la Conferencia

Pídale a su hijo/a cómo se siente sobre la escuela con preguntas tales como:

¿Hay algo que te gustaría platicar durante la conferencia o hay algo que te gustaría que le preguntara a tu maestro?

¿Hay algo que te gustaría saber acerca de tus derechos como estudiante?

Durante la Conferencia

- Averigüe como le va a tu hijo/a con preguntas tales como:
 - ¿Está mi hijo/a al nivel que le corresponde a su grado en lectura, escritura, y matemáticas?
 - ¿Puedo ver algo que mi niño ha escrito?
 - ¿Puedo ver un ejemplo de un trabajo a nivel de grado o de un buen trabajo?
 - ¿Cuáles son las fortalezas de mi hijo/a en clase?
 - ¿Cuáles son las debilidades de mi hijo/a en clase?
 - ¿Que se espera de mi hijo/a en su clase (conducta, hábitos de trabajo, etc.)?
 - ¿Qué más puedo hacer en casa para apoyar a usted y a mi hijo/a en la escuela?
 - ¿Cómo puedo contactarlo con preguntas o ideas sobre cómo ayudar a mi hijo/a a tener éxito en la escuela?
- Pida ver muestras de trabajos de estudiantes y exámenes. Pregunte como otorgan las calificaciones los maestros.
- Comparta cualquier cosa acerca de su hijo/a que cree que sería importante para el maestro/a conocer, tales como sus fortalezas, necesidades, o preocupaciones que usted pueda tener.
- Pregunte qué es lo que puede hacer en casa para ayudarle a aprender a su hijo/a. Pregunte si hay recursos, programas o servicios en la comunidad escolar que también podrían ayudar a su hijo/a.
- Haga un plan de seguimiento con los maestros, su hijo/a, y la familia. Pregunte como el maestro hará un seguimiento y las mejores maneras de comunicarse entre sí. Pregunte: ¿Necesitamos reunirnos de nuevo? ¿Cuándo nos reuniremos?

Después de la Conferencia

- Repase sus notas y plan de seguimiento con su hijo/a y con otros miembros de familia como apropiado. Mantenga una carpeta con documentos importantes, notas, y calendario escolar.
- Hable acerca de la conferencia con su hijo/a. Elogie las fortalezas de su hijo/a.
- Decida cómo va seguir con cualquier plan que usted y su hijo han convenido con el maestro.