



Ready  
Aim  
Teach

# Powerful Parent Conferences



The goal of a parent conference is to build a partnership with the family.

Use the following three phases to build a successful parent conference that lets parents know you're both working on the same side to help their child do his or her very best.

## Part 1: Planning the Conference

Keep in mind the goal: building a partnership with the family. Ask yourself the following questions as you prepare for conferences.

**Classroom:** How does your room feel? Is it inviting? Is there student work displayed? Does it feel inclusive?

**Meeting Space:** Where will we sit during the conference? Consider sitting at a table where both you and the family can sit on the same side; instead of sitting at your desk with parent(s) sitting across from you (as if in trouble). You want to send a message of partnership, not a disciplinary action.

**Gather Materials:** Have paper and pens for parent to use. Tissues. As well as, student work samples and data to share.

**Invite:** Invite, remind, re-invite – include the date, time and place. (Consider using email, text, and paper reminders). Consider any language barriers and how translation might be needed. The goal is to make sure the family feels invited and knows where to go and when.

**Organize Thoughts:** Plan what to share: Know how much time you'll have, know your data, be confident in it, and prioritize areas to share.

# Powerful Parent Conferences

## Part 2: The Conference

**Start with positive messages. The family wants to know that you know their child!**

Use sentence stems: I appreciate...I'm impressed that...I know...I was surprised to learn that...

Be authentic. This approach will leave your parents sitting up a little taller and prouder.

**Share Data through showing versus telling.**

Paint the picture. Avoid acronyms.

Depending on time, you might prioritize what you are sharing.

**If there are concerns, prioritize and share 2 to 3 at most.**

After each piece, pause and ask what questions the family might have.

**Don't rush – even if this is your 15th conference of the day, remember this is the parents' first conference of the day with you.**

When you provide the family with the time they have carved out for you, they will see you as a partner they can count on for the rest of the year.

**ASK – "What else would you like for me to know?"**

How else might I support your child?

**END with a positive.**

And that can include high expectation message.



## Part 3: Follow up is an absolute must!

Send all parents a thank you note. Express your appreciation for their time in meeting with you for the benefit of their child. Be sure to address it using their name, and include the name of their child in the note. Those personal touches matter. Feel free to email, text, write a note, or make a quick call. That personal thank you will solidify the partnership between you and the family.