



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES



DO'S and DON'TS

- **DO'S:**

- ⇒ Send home a personal invitation to attend the conference.
- ⇒ Provide a tip sheet with the invitation so that parents know what questions to ask during the conference.
- ⇒ Prepare an agenda that includes:
 - * General impressions of the child.
 - * Progress since last conference.
 - * Skills checklist or assessment results.
 - * Goals for the child in each curriculum area.
 - * Individualized Family Service Plan.
- ⇒ Prepare samples of the child's work.
- ⇒ Dress professionally to show the importance of the meeting.
- ⇒ Offer an explanation of curriculum and curriculum goals.
- ⇒ Present information with positivity, honesty and truth.
- ⇒ Practice ACTIVE LISTENING during the conference.
- ⇒ Watch parents' body language and reactions.
- ⇒ Offer supportive strategies and activities the parent and child can do at home.
- ⇒ Ask the parents for their personal goals for their child (set goals together).
- ⇒ Thank the parents for taking time to meet with you.

- **DON'TS:**

- ⇒ Wing it (provide no thought or preparation for the conference).
- ⇒ Point a finger, place blame or talk down to the parents.
- ⇒ Use jargon or use "teacher talk."
- ⇒ Rush the conference or leave out important details to stay on schedule.
- ⇒ End on a negative note.
- ⇒ Fail to include personal stories about the child that paints pictures of the points you are making about the child.
- ⇒ Get defensive or take comments personally.
- ⇒ Fail to provide a comfortable physical environment for the conference.
- ⇒ Give too many suggestions for improvement.



PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

Tips for Talking with Parents about Developmental Concerns



TIPS

EXAMPLES

Always:

Talk about development regularly

Talk with parents regularly about their child's development – not only at times of concern – and provide them with resources so they can track milestones at home.

I am so happy to be Taylor's new teacher! I care a lot about making sure all my children are on track in terms of how they play, learn, speak, act, and move for their age, so I will be looking for and tracking Taylor's developmental milestones and sharing his progress with you regularly. It would be great if you would look for milestones at home, too, and let me know what you're seeing as well. I have some free milestone checklists that can help.

Share resources

Encourage families to use [milestone checklists](#) or the [Milestone Moments booklet](#) to monitor their child's development at home. Find these free resources here: www.cdc.gov/Milestones

A great way to monitor Taylor's developmental milestones is with these checklists. They can help you understand typical milestones he should be reaching for his age and those to look for as he gets older. You can place them on the refrigerator for quick and easy reference throughout the day.

Use good listening skills

- Listen closely, make eye contact, nod when appropriate, and be silent when the parent is speaking
- Repeat the parent's main points when you respond so he or she will know you heard and understood
- Consider how the parent feels about what he or she is saying
- Watch and listen closely for clues to those feelings and acknowledge them when you respond
- Probe for more information when necessary

It sounds like you are pretty worried and I hear you saying that you do not hear Taylor speak clearly at home. Is that correct?

Let's talk about what you have noticed at home. Can you describe specific situations?

Is there anything else about Taylor's development you'd like to talk about?

When you have concerns to share:

Highlight the child's strengths

- Let the parent know what the child does well and the milestones he or she is meeting
- Keep the conversation positive

We love having Taylor in class. He follows the classroom rules and really loves to sing, dance, and act during our circle time.

Make sure you are well prepared

- Invest time in building meaningful relationships with the parents and discuss developmental progress regularly
- Complete a [milestone checklist](#) for the child's age to help the parent know that you are basing your comments on facts and not just feelings

Since our last meeting, I have noticed a few things about Taylor that I would like to discuss with you. I've been completing a milestone checklist for him, like I do for all the children, and I see he is meeting his cognitive milestones very well. However, he is not meeting a few of his language/communication milestones. For one, I have noticed that Taylor doesn't speak clearly enough for most people to understand. As you can see on the checklist, a five-year-old typically speaks clearly.

Encourage the parent to share any concerns with the child's doctor

- Remember it's not your role to make or even suggest a diagnosis
- Remind parents of the importance of acting early on concerns

There might not be anything to be concerned about, but I do think it's important to talk to Taylor's doctor about this in the next few weeks to be sure. Take this checklist with you when you go, share it, and ask the doctor for a developmental screening. This will help the doctor and you to know whether Taylor might need a little extra help. Getting help early can make a big difference! Let me know if you need anything from me for that doctor's appointment.

Follow-up with the family in a few weeks

Thank you for taking time to meet with me again. I know the last time we talked about Taylor's development, we were concerned about his language skills. Have you been able to talk with Taylor's doctor about this?

www.cdc.gov/ActEarly | 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)



Learn the Signs. Act Early.

Dear Parent,

Thank you for your willingness to schedule a conference with me to discuss your child’s progress this school year.

I have scheduled your conference for:

Day: _____

Time: _____

(Teacher Signature)

.....

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Thank you for your willingness to schedule a conference with me to discuss your child’s progress this school year.

I have scheduled your conference for:

Day: _____

Time: _____

(Teacher Signature)

Dear Parent,

Over the past few months, I have been getting to know your child. Through observing, conversing, and evaluating the work completed, I have been trying to discover how your child learns best. I would like to schedule a conference with you to discuss what I have learned, as well as gain insight from you. The more I know, and the more we work together, the greater chance of success your child has this year.

The times I am available for a conference are listed below. Please indicate your first and second choices for a conference time.

I look forward to speaking with you during our upcoming conference.

Sincerely,

(Teacher Signature)

.....

The times I am available are indicated in the chart below. Please mark your first and second choice.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time					
Choice 1 or 2					



1. Write down everything you would like to discuss with teachers (questions, comments and suggestions).
2. Write down at least 3 goals or expectations you currently have for your child.
3. Come prepared with an open mind and be willing to accept suggestions.
4. Begin with a positive attitude and express appreciation for the opportunity to meet.
5. Take notes about everything discussed at the conference.
6. Keep your emotions under control.
7. Stay on topic (avoid discussions that are not related to the conference).
8. Keep the conference within the allotted time (come early, leave on time).
9. Don't be afraid to ask tough questions, like:
 - What skills and knowledge will my child be expected to master this year?
 - How will my child be evaluated or tested?
 - How do you know if my child is ready to be moved up to the next class?
 - What can I do to help my child grow and learn?
 - How will I know what is being taught in the classroom?
 - How can I support the teacher's efforts?
 - How do you accommodate differences in learning (slow or fast learner)?





PARENT/TEACHER CONVERSATIONS

Child's Full Name: _____ DOB: _____

DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENING	
Name of Screening:	Date Given:
Results: ___ No Concerns ___ Concerns in the Area(s) of: _____	
___ Copies of Suggested Activities Given to Family for Area(s) of Concerns.	

ASSESSMENTS	
___ Observations:	
___ Formal Assessments:	
<u>Areas of Strength</u>	<u>Areas of Growth</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.
<u>At School, We Will:</u>	<u>At Home, We Will:</u>
1.	1.
2.	2.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent/Teacher Conversations

Student's Name: _____ Date/Time: _____

Present at Conference: _____

Areas of Strength (attach student's work):

Areas of Concern (attach student's work):

What we will work on at school:

What we will work on at home:

Recommendations Made at the Conference:

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher's Signature: _____ Date: _____

Director's Signature: _____ Date: _____