

TIP SHEET:

THE PARENT TEACHER INTERVIEW

PRINCIPAL

Send the message

Communicate the importance of interviews to the whole school.

Share guidelines

Let both families and teachers know about the goals and process of parent teacher interviews.

Prepare for Productive Meetings

Provide advice for parents to help them get the most out of meetings.

Provide teachers with templates to help ensure structured and well-planned meetings.

Follow Up

Follow up with families who do not attend meetings and ask if there are other ways you can share information about their child and their learning and development.

Combine Approaches

Complement one-on-one interviews with whole class/grade information sessions.

Create a welcoming school environment

Display student work, allocate a space where parents can wait comfortably, have school information in multiple languages and translators available, provide transport and child care support if needed

Be available and visible

Walk through the school, introduce yourself to parents and communicate your school's appreciation for families who have taken the time to attend interviews.

Reflect

Get feedback from parents and teachers. What worked and didn't work during parent-teacher interviews? Use this information to continuously improve planning and implementation.

TEACHER

Create a welcoming environment

Make sure your classroom/ interview space is comfortable for families. Arrange seating in circles or side by side (with adult chairs, if possible). Ideally, there should not be a table between you and the families.

Be Prepared

Prepare your thoughts and materials. Create an agenda or list of key issues you want to discuss about each student's progress and growth. Go over student data, assignments, and assessments. Do not just present marks and results that parents already know from the student report.

Acknowledge the role of the family

Acknowledge the important role of the family in learning and that a partnership with schools is important. Acknowledge the busyness of family life and that you appreciate their involvement in the meeting.

Discuss progress and growth

Start with the positive! Use examples of assignments and assessments that demonstrate progress and abilities.

Ask questions and listen actively

Solicit family knowledge regarding student strengths and needs, learning styles, and non-school learning opportunities. Share ideas for supporting learning and seek solutions collaboratively. Implement strategies based on what you have learned about family cultures, home learning environments and student strengths. Be non-judgmental.

Make an action plan

Focus on how you and the family will support the student's learning. Establish lines of communication, both school to home, and home to school.

Involve students

If students are going to be involved in the meeting, ensure that they are prepared and supported. Also ensure that there is an opportunity for parents to speak privately with you as well.

PARENTS

Reflect

Think about the meeting in advance and set a goal for what you want to achieve.

Prepare

Talk to your child. Identify questions to ask, such as: Is my child achieving at the appropriate level? What do you see as his or her strengths?

Acknowledge the role of the teacher

Acknowledge that the teacher has many students they are responsible for. Let them know you appreciate the opportunity to meet with them about your child.

Be Proactive

Ask to see examples of the student's work. Ask how work is assessed/graded. Ask what you can do at home to help your child. Find out what services are available at the school to help your child. Ask how the teacher will both challenge your child and support your child when he or she needs it.

Share

Be sure to share your thoughts and feelings about your child. Share with the teacher what you think your child is good at. Explain what he or she needs more help with.

Make an action plan

Agree on a plan with the teacher. Write it down - noting especially what you will do to support the teacher/school at home. Schedule a follow up meeting if necessary.

Follow up with your child

Talk to your child about how the meeting went. Share with your child what you learned. Show him or her how you will help with learning at home. Ask for his or her suggestions.