

The simple mention of the day or evening conference can elicit a variety of responses from both parents and teachers. The day can be quite exhausting, but over the years I have come to enjoy the time spent with parents as it presents the opportunity to share personal information about their child. The student we see at school is quite different from the child that leaves home early in the morning and returns in the late afternoon. The picture of the whole child comes into focus, and I eagerly and equally listen carefully to the parents of the students who are succeeding and those who are struggling.

I like to begin the conversation by discussing areas of success, and then move along to comments relating to effort, creativity, class participation, evidence of understanding, group participation, homework, and enthusiasm. I generally save the specifics relating to quiz/test scores until after I've discussed everything positive. In this way I am able to present a variety of information, rather than summing a whole child up with a numbered average. I assure you the parents are grateful to start off the conference on a "good note" even if there is the "not so good" to discuss!

Parent/Teacher conferences are all different, and every teacher, the students they teach, and the parent or parents who attend differ as well. Despite the varied personalities and themes for discussion, at the core parent/teacher conferences present a chance to bridge the all too existent divide between school and home, from pre-k to grade 12.

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Explore these resources:

--Arlene DeVries' 1996 *Parenting for High Potential* article, "How to Make Parent/Teacher Conferences Worthwhile and Productive," [http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles\\_id\\_10296.aspx](http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10296.aspx) is a "must read" for any educator AND parent.

--Duke University's Talent Identification Program offers tips for successful Parent/Teacher Conferences on their website. <http://www.tip.duke.edu/node/700>

--James Delisle offers some great tips.

[http://www.brightkidsresource.com/Parenting\\_Bright\\_Kids/Featured\\_Parenting\\_Articles/Successful\\_Parent\\_Teacher\\_conferences.pdf](http://www.brightkidsresource.com/Parenting_Bright_Kids/Featured_Parenting_Articles/Successful_Parent_Teacher_conferences.pdf)

--The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) has a great pdf on the subject of Parent/Teacher Conferences.

<http://www.cec.sped.org/AM/TemplateRedirect.cfm?template=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&ContentID=15039> Note: This is a "members only" link. The website Family Education has a paraphrased version written by Sandra Berger. <http://school.familyeducation.com/gifted-education/parent-teacher-conferences/38665.html>