



November 2009

Making the most of parent-teacher interviews

Schools regularly hold 'parent-teacher interviews' to update you on how your son or daughter is doing. In spite of the name, these aren't really interviews – they're more like a two-way discussion. Here are some ways you can get the most out of them.

Before meeting the teacher

You'll probably only get 10-15 minutes with the teacher and only 5-10 minutes if your son or daughter is at secondary school. So it's worth taking some time to prepare beforehand.

Read any recent school reports before you go to the meeting and write down any questions you have (see suggestions below). Always put the most important questions at the top of your list, so you make the most of your time at the meeting. Talk to your son or daughter about how they feel about school and anything that they are particularly enjoying or finding too easy or too difficult. Ask them if there's anything they might want you to talk about with the teacher.

In some schools, students are welcome to attend and may even lead the interview. If you want your son or daughter to attend the meeting with you, check that it is okay with the school. If you can't go along on the day the school has arranged, or you think you might need more time with the teacher, contact the school and make another appointment.

At the interview

Try to get there early, so that you have time to find the room where the interviews are being held. Take a pen to write notes, in case you want to talk to your child or someone else about what was discussed with the teacher.

If your child is at secondary school remember that the teachers will speak with a lot of parents that night. So, if it's the first time you have met the teacher, introduce yourself and let them know who your child is.

Remember that you don't have to wait for a parent teacher interview - you can ring the school and make an appointment to talk to the teacher at any time.

[More >](#)



After the interview

Even if your child or teen doesn't ask, they'll probably be keen to hear what you talked to the teacher about. Share the positive things that the teacher said and give them plenty of praise. Then talk about anything the teacher suggested you could do at home to help them.

If you didn't agree with something that the teacher said, it is better to stay positive about the teachers or the school in front of your child. If you have serious concerns about anything that was discussed, you should arrange a separate appointment with the school to talk about this further.

Suggested questions

Below are some ideas for questions to ask at parent-teacher interviews. If your child is in year 9-13 you could repeat the first five questions with each subject teacher, and the last three with their form teacher or dean.

1. Is my son/daughter progressing as expected?
2. What do they do well?
3. What do they need help with?
4. What can I do to help?
5. Do they participate well in class?
6. Does my son/daughter seem settled at school? How do they get along with others?
7. Are there any areas for concern?
8. What's the best way to contact you if I need to discuss any concerns?

