



# Effective Parent-Teacher Conference Strategies

Category: Working with Parents

## Workshop Overview

Following is a general overview of this workshop, including desired participant outcomes, an explanation of the workshop's alignment with the Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning, and resources that are included in print and electronic form.

**Category:** Working with Parents

**Duration:** Full workshop – 3 hours

### Desired Outcomes:

Participants will...

- Identify ways to prepare for a conference with parents.
- Apply best practices for conducting a conference with parents.

### Learning Forward Standards for Professional Learning:

- **Learning Communities:** Occurs within learning communities committed to continuous improvement, collective responsibility, and goal alignment.
- **Learning Designs:** Integrates theories, research, and models of human learning to achieve its intended outcomes.
- **Implementation:** Applies research on change and sustains support for implementation of professional learning for long term change.
- **Outcomes:** Aligns its outcomes with educator performance and student curriculum standards

### Resources in This Binder:

- Handouts:
  - Workshop Agenda
  - Attendee Notes
  - 3-2-1 Evaluation Form
  - Certificate of Completion
- “Think About It” Exercise
- Ready, Set, Go Planning Activity





## Topic Outline

Understanding the general flow of topics to be covered is an important part of giving a strong presentation. This allows the presenter(s) to lead effective group discussions and speak extemporaneously. Following are the main topics covered in this PowerPoint presentation. As you prepare to give the workshop, you may want to refer to this page often.



### Main Topics:

1. Preparing for a Conference with Parents
2. Conducting a Conference with Parents

### Subtopics:

#### 1. Preparing for a Conference with Parents

- a. Purpose of the Conference
- b. Common Practices
- c. Dressing for Respect
- d. Getting Ready for the Conference
- e. Delivering Information to Parents
- f. Importance of the Child's Presence

#### 2. Conducting a Conference with Parents

- a. Conference Participants
- b. During the Conference
- c. Ending the Conference



## Presentation Outline

This outline is designed for you to see the PowerPoint presentation at a glance. Note that slide numbers and the approximate amount of time needed per slide are shown in the right two columns. **The times in bold print show the approximate total time needed for that topic, which includes the approximate times for the activities, shown in parentheses.** You might consider keeping this page within reach during the presentation.

Section of Presentation	Slide #	Timing (mins)
<b>Getting Started</b>		
Introduce self, co-teacher, participants	1-2	
Explain materials issued to participants		
Cover objectives (from Workshop Overview)	2	<b>30</b>
<b>Activity</b> – Creating Impressions	3	(20)
<b>Topic 1 – Preparing for a Conference with Parents</b>		
<b>Discussion Point</b> – Why is it important to answer every question parents have?	11	(10)
<b>Activity</b> – Write Your Own Script	16	(20)
Break		
<b>Topic 2 – Conducting a Conference with Parents</b>		
<b>Activity</b> – Brainstorming	29	(30)
<b>Closing Remarks</b>		
	30	<b>5</b>
Total of 2 hours and 40 minutes (not including break)		

### Helpful tip!

**This workshop can be broken up into shorter sessions so that you can adapt the presentation according to your time constraints.**

## Slide 9

**PDXPERT** PREPARING FOR A CONFERENCE WITH PARENTS

### Getting Ready

Before the conference, remember to:

1. **Keep a file folder on the student.**
  - Include complete information about:
    - Academics.
    - Social relationships.
    - Behavior.
    - Two additional items—emotional growth and physical development.

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*Before conferencing with parents, here are some important things we should get ready for.*

**1. Keep a file folder on the student.** *Have student records, which should document the following features, ready so that you can refer to it during the conference.*

**Academics.** *This refers to how the student is performing in each area of study compared to the class and to national averages, and whether he or she is achieving to his or her potential. Grade books and attendance sheets are simply not enough for parent-teacher conferences. Seeing is believing. A collection of assignments, test papers, and reports is worth a thousand words.*

**Social relationships.** *This refers to how the student interacts with classmates and adults.*

**Behavior.** *This refers to positives and negatives in the classroom or school setting.*

**Two additional items.** *Information about the student's emotional growth and physical development may be included if appropriate.*

*If parents don't come in for a conference or attend parents' night, then send the folder home at the end of the course or school year. Either way, you will have performed a valuable service for students and parents. In addition, you will find this information valuable for student examination on the last days of school. Some students will be surprised by what they didn't know at the beginning of the year and how much they have learned.*

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**Slide 16**

**PDXPERT** PREPARING FOR A CONFERENCE WITH PARENTS

Fourth grader, Bettina, is in the gifted and talented program. She started the year producing good work, but her effort has waned and she is barely meeting the requirements to stay in the program. You have spoken with her two times but have received no real feedback. Now you want to meet with her parents.

**ACTIVITY: Write Your Own Script**

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Lindsay Support House

**Activity: Write Your Own Script**

Allow 20 minutes for this activity.

This activity is meant to have participants apply the things they learned about delivering information during parent-teacher conferences. It is also meant to provide an opportunity for the participants to learn from each other. Specifically, participants will be asked to write their own scripts for one of the four techniques for delivering information discussed earlier.

Ask participants to look for a partner. Assign each partner group one of the techniques on the previous four slides. Have each participant write a script on a piece of paper. Tell them that five to eight minutes will be allotted for writing. The remaining time will be allotted for sharing their scripts with their partners.

**Debrief:** Ask participants to share and compare their use of the technique with their partner's. Call on partner groups representing each of the four techniques to share their script with the whole group.

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## “Think About It” Exercise



Have staff complete this exercise to begin implementing what they learned during the workshop. Distribute this document to staff by attaching the file to the Next Day Follow-Up Email, or make copies for the staff.

1. List the things you should prepare before conferencing with parents.

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2. How will you make sure that conferences stay focused on the issue at hand?

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3. Why is there a need for educators to be specific, honest, frank, and alert when communicating with parents during parent-teacher conferences?

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