

SAFE Kids HEALTHY Kids HAPPY Kids



Tips for Parents When Talking to Teachers

■ Introduce yourself to your child's teacher within the first two weeks of school.

Wait until school has been in session for at least 2-3 days. The first few days are usually hectic.

You might catch the teacher at a free moment. If not, make an appointment to meet before or after school. A phone call also works. You could send a note to school to ask what is best for the teacher.



When you meet, you can say, “Hi Mr. _____. I’m _____, Joshua’s mother. He’s a fifth grader in your 6th period math class. I just want to let you know that I want to work with you to make this year a success for Joshua. Math is usually his hardest subject, and he sometimes has difficulty completing assignments. How can we help him at home? How can you and I work together to see that he always does his homework?”

Keep your conversation positive. Do not harp on the past and what was negative. Also, **listen** more than you talk.

It is important to touch base with the teacher. This sends a message to your child and his teacher that you are a concerned parent. It establishes a good rapport so that if difficulties later arise, you’ve already established a communication line. A parent contact gives the teacher a heads-up on a child. Most teachers then make an extra effort to keep track of the student.

■ **Maintain regular contact throughout the school year.** Avoid waiting for parent-teacher conferences or report cards. By then, it’s

If you have a particularly challenging child who keeps using the excuse that there was no homework, it may help to keep in touch every day. Even on days with no homework, a note is sent and signed so the parent knows that there really was no assignment. The teacher can comment on a good day or an upcoming test or project as well as grades on previous work. The parent signs each day to let the teacher know that he has read the note.

■ **Never talk negatively about the teacher in front of your child.** Doing this makes hard for the teacher—and even for you—to help your child change his behavior. It tells your child that he really does not need to mind the teacher because even mom agrees that the teacher is at fault.

Also, keep in mind that you may have only heard half the story. The teacher may provide a different view.

■ **Make a list of questions and concerns for phone or face-to-face conferences.**

Write down your concerns on a regular basis so you have a list ready. This will also let the teacher know you are serious about your child’s schooling.

■ **In a conference with the teacher, say at least one positive comment for every criticism.** Always start out with something that you appreciate. This will make it easier for the teacher to listen to your concerns when he realizes that your sole purpose is not to nail him.

■ **Talk solutions, not problems.** What’s done is done. Finger-pointing and rehashing the problem will not solve it. Instead, try to spend most of the time figuring out ways to fix the problem.

Call the Parent Help Line. We listen. We can find you help.
544-5808 or 1-888-727-5889 from 10 a.m. to 10 p.m., 7 days a week.