

# Parent Teacher Interviews: Tips for school staff

## Before

### *Send the message*

Communicate the importance of interviews to the whole school.

### *Send invitations*

Disseminate information about interviews to families through flyers, notes, phone calls, meetings and assemblies. Send reminders the week and/or day before.

### *Share guidelines*

Let both families and teachers know about the goals and logistics of parent-teacher interviews, including availability of child care, transportation, interpreter services and alternate scheduling options.

### *Review student work*

In preparation for the interviews think about what you would like to learn about your students from their parents.

### *Create a welcoming school environment*

Displaying 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.

## During

### *Be available and visible*

Principals ask teachers if they need support or additional information to conduct interviews. Walk through the school, introduce yourself to parents and communicate your school's appreciation for families who have taken the time to attend interviews.

### *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 input into student strengths and needs, learning styles, and nonschool learning opportunities. Share ideas for supporting learning and seek solutions collaboratively.

### *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.

## After

### *Get feedback from parents and teachers*

What did and what did not work during parent-teacher interviews? Use this information to continuously improve the planning and implementation of parent-teacher interviews.

### *Follow up with families*

If practical, contact parents who attended the interviews and thank them for doing so. Contact parents who did not attend and offer alternative ways to communicate about their child.

### *Communicate regularly*

Communicate with families on an ongoing basis, with positive news as well as updates on student progress and challenges.

### *Connect in-class activities*

Create responsive instructional practices based on what you learned about family cultures, home learning environments, and student strengths and needs.

Adapted from Harvard Family Research Project 2009, **Parent-Teacher Conference Tip Sheets for Principals, Teachers and Parents** <<http://www.hfrp.org/family-involvement/publications-resources/parent-teacher-conference-tip-sheets-for-principals-teachers-and-parents>>.



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