

Northeastern Catholic District School Board
PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS
Communicating with Parents

*Communicating with parents is often simply a matter of common sense.
Tell them what is going on in your classroom and why.
Treat them the way you would like to be treated as a parent.*

The time is quickly approaching for you to participate in your first parent/teacher interviews. A Parent/Teacher interview is a short meeting time designed to discuss each student's progress during the first term. Please take note of a few important points to help you prepare.

Before the meeting...

- ✓ Arrange a seating area within the classroom that is warm and welcoming. Ensure that student work is visible within the classroom.
- ✓ To ensure privacy, you may choose to close the door when meeting with parents, or be seated away from the door so that parents waiting outside cannot overhear your conversation.
- ✓ Be well-prepared - ensure that you have samples of student work for every child. It is helpful to organize the work samples/portfolios in the same order as the assigned scheduled. Quick reference and easy access!
- ✓ Anticipate questions that parents may ask and know how you will respond. Share your concerns or questions with your principal, your NTIP mentor, or an experienced colleague and they may be able to help you craft an appropriate response to these questions.

During the meeting...

- ★ Greet the parents and thank them for attending the meeting.
- ★ KNOW YOUR STUDENTS. Be confident with the parents and share information effectively. Speak to the characteristics of the child and acknowledge how their child impacts upon the classroom environment. Value the contributions that the child makes.
- ★ Advise the parent that the interview will be scheduled for 10 minutes. Kindly share with them that parent needing additional conference time are welcomed to set up a separate meeting time.
- ★ Be clear and concise with your comments: focus on a strength, an area for improvement, and a strategy that you will implement to support the needs of their child. Ensure that student work is shared.
- ★ Be an attentive listener. Parents may share important information with you to help with their programming needs. Take their suggestions seriously and thank them for sharing pertinent information with you.
- ★ If the meeting takes a turn for the worse, stay focused on the needs and best interest of the student. You are free to end the meeting before the designated time, if needed. Advise the parent that the interview may continue at a later time, when the principal can join in on the discussion. Never hesitate to seek the assistance of your principal if and when needed.

At the end of the meeting...

- ✿ Summarize any new information shared by the parent and possible communication strategies that you will implement during the second term.
- ✿ If needed, set another date for a more in-depth interview.
- ✿ Thank the parent and encourage continued partnership in their child's education.

A FEW FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM:

- As you prepare for first term reporting to parents, ensure that you are well prepared, able to share student progress with confidence, based on evidence from student work, and in a way that parents will understand. Don't use educational jargon. Speak in a way that parents will understand exactly what you are saying and how it affects their child.
- Know each student. Know each student. Know each student. There is nothing worse for a parent than when a teacher *thinks* they know something about their child. Remember: be confident and share only what you know to be true.
- It is sometimes useful to set a timer at the beginning of the meeting. Share with the parents why you are setting the timer - you respect the schedule and time of all parents and hope to be as punctual as possible.
- Parents are not the enemy. They should be your greatest ally as you work together to provide their child with the best possible opportunities in Catholic education.
- Remember - parents send you the best they've got. The child before you is a parent's pride and joy. They have dreams for that child. They want what is best for that child. Be positive in your comments....even when it may seem difficult to find that one strength.
- Have fun. Maximize this opportunity to get to know your classroom families. This is a great chance to meet parents and discuss ways that you can work together to help every child meet their full potential.

A PRAYER BEFORE PARENT/TEACHER INTERVIEWS....

Exodus 3:12, 4:12

Almighty God, you were the source of hope for our ancestors, the people of Israel, and you are our source of hope. When Moses argued that he could not possibly confront Pharaoh, you told him, "I will be with you." When he feared that they would not listen to him, you said, "I will be your mouth and teach you what you are to speak."

God, be with me now. Be my mouth and teach me what to speak. Just as you strengthened Moses, strengthen me with the hope that you will always stand with me and guide me. Come, God of all hope.

