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Tips for Organization

Parent Conferences (cont.)

Prior Communication—Some teachers find it effective to make a brochure to give parents at the beginning of the school year. What should you include in a brochure? Here are several suggestions:

- ✓ a list of class rules
- ✓ homework requirements
- ✓ a time schedule of daily activities
- ✓ expectations of times you will be free for telephone calls or conferences
- ✓ principal's name, assistant principal's name, school telephone number
- ✓ Never put your home telephone number in a brochure. You may not want parents (or students) to call at home. Use discretion and only give out the number when you know it will be kept in confidence by the parent.

At the first of the year, before the formal conference time, call the parents. Get off to a good start with your parents. Call and introduce yourself as their child's teacher. Tell about things that are happening and will be happening in the classroom. Find something good to say about their child. You will not only aid in fostering a positive relationship with the parents, but it will make it easier to work with them during conference time. Too often, teachers do not make an initial contact prior to meeting them for the first time at parent conference time. Prior contact pays off dividends in the long run.

Inviting Parents—When the time comes for setting up the formal conference period, ask both parents of each child to come. This affords you the opportunity to meet both parents and helps to clarify questions they might have. Remember, your school year will be more successful if you have the parents backing you and believing in you. Most of the time, you will find parents cooperative and willing to help in any way. However, be prepared. You will have some parents who are hostile. Do your best to make them feel comfortable by listening to whatever they want to say. If you get defensive, you will only complicate the issue. Try to offer ways to correct any problem that may be brought into the conference.





Tips for Writing

Weekly Writing

Try some of these ideas for writing during the week. Write three questions on the board before students arrive. Tell them that they must answer all the questions in complete sentences. Remind them to use their best handwriting. Alter the activities on each day. See the examples below for ideas.

Monday Mumbo—On Monday questions should center around the weekend—places the student might have gone, a special event that happened, a kindness act the student saw or did, etc.

Tuesday Trivia—Tuesday's questions could be questions on what a certain vocabulary word might mean, an idiom or simile meaning to define, an off-beat question, etc.

Wednesday Work—Wednesday's work might be simply to look up meanings of assigned words or a letter to a business or person asking for a particular job and telling why he or she would be the best one for the job.

Thursday Theater—Thursday's Theater work might be a script to be read by two people. It might be a simple creative thought or a list of actions for playing charades.

Friday's Funnies—Friday's Funnies might be jokes or stories of funny things that are either made-up or real incidents.

Whatever you do, make it interesting and a light challenge for each student. Give a set amount of time. At first, you will not get much from the students, but as days and weeks progress, you will see improvement in their writing.

Terrible Bs and Ds

Teaching the differences between a "b" and a "d" can give small children difficulty. Here is a well-used technique that works!

Hold your hands in front of you. Point the four fingers upward. Take the index finger and the thumb on each hand and form a circle. The left hand should look like a "b" and the right should look like a "d."

