

Parent Teacher Conference Guide

Middle School

The biggest difference between elementary and middle school conferences will be the pace of the discussion. You will have less time with teachers in middle school than in elementary school. Depending on your child's middle school, he could have from 2 to 6 different teachers. You will likely have to go from room to room to meet and talk with each teacher. This is around when parents often stop attending the meetings. Try to keep in mind the importance of establishing a good rapport and opening lines of communication with your child's teacher, as you may have done in elementary school. It is still important for you to attend the conference.

- **You should be able to get more specific insight into your child's strengths and weaknesses by subject.**
Since your child will most likely have a different teacher for each subject, the teacher will have a good sense of how your child is performing in that particular class. You may find that he is excelling in math but falling behind in reading. This can help you target your learning reinforcement at home, or find tutors specific to a subject.
- **Ask your child's teacher about homework and assignments specific to the class.**
Homework really goes up a notch in middle school and the teacher should be able to tell you how your child is doing with independent work, time management, and organization. Is he turning assignments and papers in on time? Does he wait until the last minute or does he have a good plan for getting everything done? Middle school is the time when your child will be taking more personal responsibility and it's important to ask if he is meeting those challenges.
- **You should expect a less holistic view of your child than in elementary school.**
Since the teacher does not spend the entire day with your child, she will only know how he is doing in her class, and may not have an overall view of his performance. This is one of the main differences between elementary school and middle school.
- **You should still ask about social and emotional concerns.**
In middle school, your child will be going through a lot of changes physically and socially. How does he get along with his classmates? Is he being bullied or bullying other students? By speaking to each teacher, you may discover similarities across all the classes and be better able to identify any areas of concern.
- **In middle school, students often begin to be invited to parent-teacher conferences.**
If your child is invited, bring him along and ask him to contribute to the conversation. This is a good way to show you are all involved and have the same goals – to get the most out of your child's time at school and ensure the best academic achievement he can.
- **Teachers can be great resources, if you ask the right questions.**
If your child needs extra help in one subject, his teacher may be able to suggest former students who would make good tutors. The teacher may also know of other resources – like clubs or study groups—that may help your child.

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