

PARENT STUDENT TEACHER INTERVIEWS

Ten minutes with your adolescent's teacher to discuss your concerns about the progress of your adolescent may not seem adequate. However, if you organize your thoughts and prepare ahead of time, these few minutes may prove invaluable for both you and your adolescent. Following are suggestions on making the most of your interview.

Be realistic. If this is your adolescent's first year with this teacher, seven weeks of one class a day is not going to give the teacher an in-depth relationship with your adolescent. Are the current marks a significant change from previous report cards?

Prioritize. You may not have time to talk with all of your adolescent's teachers, so figure out who is most important to see and get in line! If your adolescent tends to struggle in mathematics, for example, make sure you touch base with the mathematics teacher.

What is the teacher's perception of my adolescent's performance? Ask, "What do I need to know?" Once you understand the situation, a good follow-up question is "What can I do?" Understand that reporting the good and not-so-good news about your adolescent's progress or behaviour is part of the teacher's job.

Ask for specific follow-up suggestions. Has your adolescent sought extra help? Some of the questions on the other side of the sheet could be of assistance to you during homework time. Is there information about your adolescent that the teacher might not know but would help them when working with your adolescent?

Schedule separate meetings for big concerns. Ten minutes will not be enough time for the teacher and you to develop a plan for dealing with big concerns. Similarly, if you become aware of serious problems during the interview, suggest a follow-up meeting in a setting where you have more time and privacy.

Even if your adolescent was present during the conference, discuss it with him or her afterward. If improvement is required, make suggestions in a positive manner. Remember that the conference may be over, but your communication with the teacher is not. It's important to stay in contact with the teacher throughout the year.

Sources:

<http://www.teachers.ab.ca/Quick%20Links/Publications/The%20Learning%20Team/Volume%209/Number%203/Pages/Parent%20teacher%20meeting%20guide.aspx>

http://ca.lifestyle.yahoo.com/family-relationships/articles/parenting/rogers-todaysparent/behaviour_and_development_-_the_five-minute_parent-teacher_interview