

P/T Conferences

- **Before the conferences:**

Thriving 3's, Fantastic 4's & 5's: Staple the self-portrait and the cutting sheet to the back of the evaluation form.

Make a copy of the evaluation form. We keep the original of both the evaluation, self-portrait and cutting sheet, and just show the parents the self-portrait and cutting sheet. The parents are given the photocopy of the evaluation form.

Before making copies: Make sure ALL boxes on the evaluation form have been filled in for the appropriate dates, whether it is for August, Fall, or Spring.

Write a short, positive comment at the bottom of the evaluation form in the appropriate space. Examples: "I sure enjoyed having Joey in my class this year." Or, "Suzie is such a pleasure to have in class."

- Be prepared for each conference ahead of time. Have your files in order. Don't spend the parents' conference time looking for that student's file or searching for a certain worksheet, etc.
- When the conference is over, walk with the parents toward the door as they leave. Look for your next parents, greet them with a smile and invite them in. (Don't make them feel like there are going to the dentist's office for a tooth drilling!)
- **Sandwich** – something positive, followed by something the student may need to work on, followed by something positive (overall; not with every point you need to make).
- **Stress the positives!** Have the parents leave with a very positive impression about their child, this school, and you, the teacher.
- **Keep to the evaluation forms when having the conference. Don't wander too far off from the objective evaluation, unless you have**

a really positive comment you'd like to make about the student. Otherwise, keep to the form as much as possible. And don't make comments like, "it was so distracting when we were trying to evaluate", or "they were getting tired", or "we were in a rush to complete the forms", etc.

- Leave a few minutes at the end of the conference for any questions or concerns that parents might have. **Always, always try to give only positive feedback whenever possible.** While we aren't trying to sugar-coat everything and give a false impression of their child, conferences are not the time to inform parents for the first time that their child is misbehaving or has issues. There should not be any surprises, except good ones, for parents during conferences. If you feel there's a serious issue that needs to be discussed, see me first.
- **Fantastic 4's & 5's Teachers:** Some parents will ask if their child is ready for kindergarten next year. Reassure them that we will have a better opinion about that by the spring conference. If you or they have any doubts, talk with me.
- **Thriving 3's Teachers:** Please do not recommend to parents that their children are ready for kindergarten and don't need to attend the Fantastic 4's & 5's class, **before first discussing this with me.**
- Remind parents that evaluations are individually-based. We aren't comparing students with other students. Our hope is to see an improvement in the numbers from the last evaluation. Reassure parents that if we were seeing a significant problem, we would let them know. The preschool age is a tremendous period for growth and change in youngsters. So many changes are occurring daily with these little ones. So don't let any parent be discouraged if the numbers are low right now.
- **Be professional, kind, and friendly.** If the conversation gets out of hand, I will be nearby for you to call on. **Stay on message. Keep on time.** It's okay to go over if you don't have an appointment

immediately following this session. But if you have a following appointment, keep things moving. Keep a watch or clock in your path of sight, so that you don't appear to be rude by looking at the clock during the session.

- Give a comprehensive, overall summary about the student, but don't overwhelm the parents with too many details, or talk above their head with educator's terms. Explain what "fine motor skills" are, etc. Also, use terms like "In my professional opinion..." Using this verbage may help in a difficult situation. It's less personal, but yet stresses that you are a professional.
- Please dress professionally (business casual – no jeans, please) for the conferences. (You can wear the same outfit both nights if you want to. I won't tell!) 😊 Also, please be at least 20 minutes early for your first conference and have everything ready to go.
- Parents might be a little nervous, as some of you might be also. But please don't be. Enjoy this time with your parents. Smile, smile, smile and laugh with them. Many will be surprised how well their child is doing. Make sure parents leave happy and reassured. REMEMBER, THIS IS PRESCHOOL! NOT MEDICAL SCHOOL!!! Have fun!
- Be sure to contact me before your conferences to go over any questions or concerns you might have.

Most of all, enjoy this time with your students' parents. It's a great way to get to know your parents. Smile. Be confident. Be prepared. Pray for guidance and wisdom. AND HAVE FUN! Remember, this is preschool - - - not medical school!