



Trust, understanding, mutual support and innovation are increased when parents are:

- ⇒ **Welcomed by the school;**
- ⇒ **Perceived as helpful and potential allies;**
- ⇒ **Openly given information, impressions and evaluations promptly;**
- ⇒ **Treated as unique experts in gathering data on their children and given an equal sense of control;**
- ⇒ **Given more than routine roles and accepted as partners in the education of their student;**
- ⇒ **Taken seriously enough so that the school is able to make changes as a result of their involvement;**
- ⇒ **Encouraged to work hand-in-hand with other parents of students with disabilities in school related activities; and**
- ⇒ **Able to communicate their needs and feelings without fear of being labeled or made to feel incompetent.**

The Conference

- ⇒ **Consider the parents' work schedule when planning the conference;**
- ⇒ **Explain the purpose of the conference and what will be reviewed;**
- ⇒ **Explain that the parent may bring a friend or advocate, and**
- ⇒ **Provide a written copy of their legal rights and responsibilities.**

At the conference:

- ⇒ **Introduce each person and their role;**
- ⇒ **Share information in clear, simple language and avoid jargon;**
- ⇒ **State specific observations, not generalizations;**
- ⇒ **Seek information and accept all contributions from parents as significant;**
- ⇒ **If the student is present, talk with him/her, not about the student;**
- ⇒ **Check and compare perceptions; and**
- ⇒ **Insure that all questions are fully answered.**

