

**Effective Parent Conferences:
What To Do and What Not To Do**
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Do

Make "happy calls" and send "happy-grams" to parents of difficult students

Prepare reports summarizing student's progress

Emphasize strengths

Explain and seek agreement with parents on your action plan

Ask parents to let you know of changes in student behavior that they notice

Meet with student before parent-teacher conference

Protect student self-esteem in parent-teacher conference

Consult parents as resources

Use reflective listening, especially when parents are upset

Request presence of counselor or principal if you think you expect a difficult conference

Understand the unique concerns of single parents

Don't

Dwell on student's mistakes when reporting to parents

Allow parents to focus on student's mistakes

Argue with parents

Ask parents to monitor or consequtate school teacher-student behavior issues or in-school assignments

Keep student "in the dark," fostering suspicion or fear

Permit parents to attack their student

Think you have to handle every difficult situation yourself

Rush toward quick solutions

Overlook parents' strengths

Make assumptions about nontraditional families before getting to know them