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# Insightful parent-teacher conference questions

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An informative parent-teacher conference can give you a wonderful insight into your child's academic performance, work attitude and social abilities.

Prepare well for the conference so you can maximise the time you spend with your child's teacher. These insightful questions will help.

## Work and attitude

### Is my child's overall academic performance on track?

Expect to know how your child has performed in all curriculum areas according to expectations for their age and stage. Use age expectations as your benchmark, avoiding peer and sibling comparisons.

### What do the results mean?

Sometimes school-based assessments and the language used in reporting can be difficult to understand in lay terms. If unsure, ask for clarification of results in general terms without getting lost in the minute detail.

### Does my child need help in any areas?

It helps to know if your child is falling behind in a particular subject or set of skills so you can formulate an improvement plan.

### How can I help at home?

There may be specific things to do at home to help your child such as extra reading, giving more responsibility or special home activities that you can think about for the following year.

### What are my child's strengths?

If a child is struggling, identifying their strengths will boost your confidence and provide valuable information to work with.

### Does my child try hard?

Understanding your child's attitude to work is important to form a rounded picture. Some kids perform to a good standard but don't exert themselves. Others work hard to achieve modest results. Effort matters.

### Does my child complete most tasks?

If the answer to this question is no, then explore possible reasons with the teacher. Was the work too hard? Does your child have a problem finishing work? Does he get easily distracted?

### When does my child produce their best work?

Some kids work better on their own, some love to work in groups, some love repetitive work, others love creative tasks, some excel outside the classroom and some love working in specific subjects. Knowing your child's strengths and interests will help provide a positive direction for the following year.

## **Behaviour, social and emotional development**

### Has my child generally been happy at school?

A child's wellbeing is a good indicator of their academic success, their attitude to learning and to school. Be aware that many factors can impact a child's wellbeing, but getting a teacher's perspective is extremely helpful.

### How has my child behaved this year?

Ask for a snapshot of your child's classroom and playground behaviour including how they behave for other teachers and their behaviour towards peers.

### What messages should I give my child at home about behaviour?

Teachers generally have a valuable perspective about your child's behaviour based on experience and broad behavioural norms. Use this perspective to guide your child toward positive behaviours in the following year.

### How does my child get along with others?

How a child interacts socially inside and outside the classroom will help give you a well-rounded picture. It's also an area that may need to be addressed in the following year with your child's teacher, should problems be identified.

## **Other questions**

### What surprised you about my child this year?

This open-ended question may provide a delightfully different insight into your child's year at school.

### What advice do you have for helping my child improve in any area we've discussed?

You don't want to leave an interview feeling overwhelmed with areas that need improving, but it's useful to identify one or two areas of focus for the coming year.

### Do you have any further advice or information for me?

This is another open-ended question that could provide an unexpected, even important insight into your child.

## **In closing**

This list of questions is a guide only. Choose your own questions according to what you'd like to know. Be prepared, be friendly and be respectful and the interview is sure to go well.