

# 20 Tips for Parents

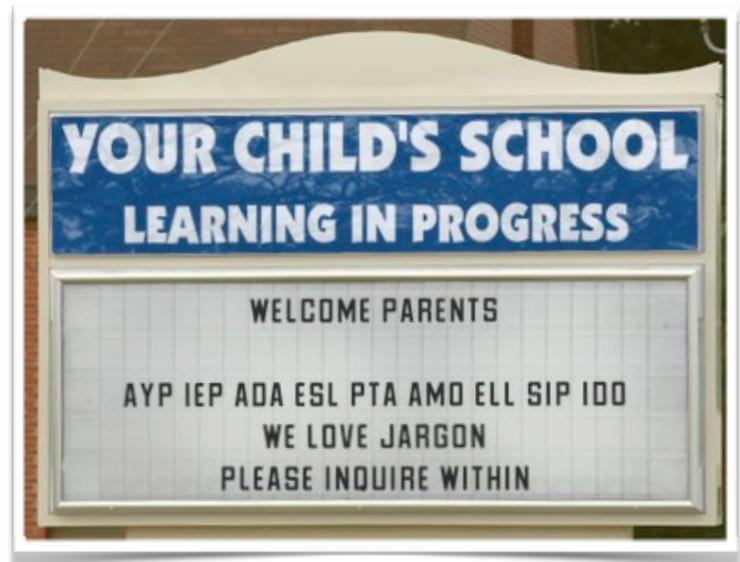
## For Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences

By Leila Kubesch

Teachers really look forward to Parent-Teacher conferences. When they're over, though, we are disappointed when some parents don't keep their appointments, and when too many others don't even make one.

We want to work as partners with you, and to share about your child's progress. Teachers often feel as if they spend more time complying with regulations than with actually getting to teach, so we are extremely glad to have your help in the process. Here are some strategies to make the most of the visits with your child's teacher, so that together we can boost the child's academic success:

1. Please show up.
2. Please be on time.
3. Tell us about your child's strengths - it gives us a great starting point to address areas of need.
4. Please ask questions. Don't let us talk the entire time.
5. We sometimes get caught-up in our jargon (IEP, ELL, SFA , and on and on... until you may feel like you need CPR!) Please ask us to clarify, until you're sure you understand us.
6. No one to watch your child during the appointment? No problem! Bring him/her along, and we can provide crayons and paper.



7. We feel awkward if your child acts disrespectful towards you at the meeting. We are likely to put our class rules into practice, because we can't stand it and neither should you.
8. Ask specific questions about how the child interacts with his/her classmates.
9. Ask what we feel are your child's strengths and weaknesses. The answers may surprise you.
10. Share with us what works at home. If you already have a system that works for your child, we'll be much further along in helping your child excel.
11. Keep your promise about the call or e-mail follow-up you suggested.
12. We are flattered when you ask us to recommend books and other resources that are most appropriate for your child.
13. We love your offers to help at home or in school!
14. Your child needs to be at school every day, even if they have good grades. They cannot make up the missed instruction, or the missed interactions with their classmates.
15. Please plan your vacations for the scheduled school breaks. We do not like being asked if it is OK to pull your child out of school for vacations. We have rigorous standards we must meet, and we count on you to support attendance.
16. We share your child's weaknesses to help us address them through home support. While behavioral shortcomings should be corrected, children should never be punished for academic challenges.
17. We cannot give information about other students ,even if you want to invite them to a party. You may send invitations to school with your child.
18. We are not trained in all the disabilities children might have. Please share the specifics of your situation with us, and recommend books that might help. We are learners too.
19. Don't feel as if the 15 minute appointment slot is all the time you can have with the teacher. We will be glad to have further meetings, along with phone and email contact, to ensure we do the best we can for your child.
20. Know that you are the most important teacher at home. We value you and cherish your visits.