



Accelerated Literacy Learning

Tips from literacy specialist Susan Radley Brown

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Susan Says....

As Parent/Teacher conferences draw near, I am reminded of my own experience as a classroom teacher. I wanted the parents and guardians of the students I taught to know that I cared about their children. I prepared for each conference gathering samples of the student's work to share. I organized the notes I took during writer's and reader's workshop. Reading and writing are connected, and I wanted to make sure that the link was explicit and clear.



I started each conference celebrating student growth over time, while also making parents aware of realistic and attainable goals that

their child needed to work toward. Recognizing that parents and guardians know their child well, I left time to also be a listener.

When asked, they told me about their family literacy – what's displayed on the refrigerator door, Bible passages read aloud and what sections of the newspaper they doled out to be read while eating breakfast. They told me about their child's diary or journal filled with thoughts and memories, favorite places that their child liked to read and trips to the library to borrow books. I knew that the information and stories they shared would give me important insights that would influence my role as the child's teacher.

It is essential that a parent recognize that they are their child's best advocate. Parents should bring a paper and a pen to the conference in order to take notes – it is a lot of information to process and remember.

It is equally important that they bring their questions and concerns – they need to trust that, as a partnership, a parent and teacher have a shared

responsibility for a student's education.

The article, "A Parent-Teacher Conference Check list," in this month's newsletter has many

helpful tips as parents get ready for the upcoming Parent/ Teacher conferences.

We've also included another step by step "how to." However, this month we've included a narrative frame that provides a context ("you've mashed the potatoes, stuffed the turkey..."), as well as an engaging ending. It is essential for students to include these features in their own functional writing so as to meet the standard at their grade level for Narrative Procedure.



Happy Reading and Writing!

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A Parent-Teacher Conference Check List:

Excerpts from Parent Education Network Notes # 2

Before

- ☞ If you are unable to attend the scheduled conference, reschedule.
- ☞ Talk with your child about his/her most and least favorite subject or any other concern he/she might have.
- ☞ Make a checklist of things to discuss with the teacher in the order of importance, and stick to the list.

During

- ☞ Try to make a positive comment about the school or the classroom.
- ☞ Ask if your child is adjusting and if he/she gets along with others.
- ☞ Be a good listener and see what the teacher has to say.
- ☞ Keep a positive attitude!
- ☞ Tell the teacher of any special talents or interests your child has.
- ☞ Share things you want the teacher to know about your child. Remember you are your child's first educator and you know your child best.
- ☞ Is your child working to capacity, at or below grade level? Ask to see samples of his/her work.
- ☞ Does your child participate in class?
- ☞ Ask about the policies on homework, tests and quizzes as well as any long-term assignments.
- ☞ Review your list and discuss anything else that seems important.
- ☞ Remember this is a process—you won't get everything discussed at one meeting. It's not the end of the world if you forget to ask a question or don't discuss all of the issues. If necessary, schedule an additional conference.
- ☞ Be open to the information the teacher has about your child. Kids can be very different at school than they are at home.
- ☞ Be sure to ask for specific suggestions on ways to help your child do well. This is an important part of the meeting. It can become your action plan.

After

- ☞ Make notes to help you remember what was discussed at the conference. Start a folder about your child: test scores, report cards, health records, notes from the teacher, samples of work
- ☞ Make a calendar: mark the next conference, mark important events (concerts, programs, etc.), mark all parent meetings and social events, mark due dates of class projects and reports
- ☞ Write down the most important thing you learned from the conference!
- ☞ Share the conference results with your child. Make sure your child knows that you and the teacher care about his/her progress and will work together to help your child succeed in school.
- ☞ Stay in regular touch with the teacher to discuss the progress your child is making.
- ☞ Meeting with your child's teachers should help build strong parent-teacher partnerships—partnerships that are needed if you and your child's teachers are to reach your common goal: helping your child get the best education possible.

Parent-teacher conferences are essential building blocks for home-school communication.

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Questions the Teacher May Have about Your Child

1. How does your child feel about school?
2. Does your child have any health problems?
3. What does your child do with his/her time outside of school?
4. What are your child's interests and hobbies?
5. What types of books does your child read at home?

Conferences Are...

- 👤 For listening, sharing and reinforcing the idea of team work.
- 👤 Teachers need the help of parents to do the best job possible of educating every child.
- 👤 Parents provide important perspectives and information that can be extremely valuable to the teacher.
- 👤 The teacher can, in turn, help parents play an active role in education at home.

Children are more likely to succeed in school if they can view their parents and teacher working together cooperatively.

Hot Apple Cider

You've mashed the potatoes, stuffed the turkey, polished the silverware and set the Tivo for the football game. But to make your Thanksgiving Day celebration even more memorable, you will only need apple juice or cider, a cinnamon stick and a few minutes of free time.

Ingredients:

- * 4 cups apple juice or cider
- * 8 whole cloves
- * 5 allspice berries
- * 1 cinnamon stick
- * 1 orange
- * 1 to 2 tbsp. honey, optional

Instructions:

- * First, put the juice or cider in a heavy saucepan.
- * Tie the cloves, allspice and cinnamon in a paper coffee filter and add to the saucepan.
- * Cut the orange in half. Then, cut one half into four slices and set aside. Put the other half of the orange into the saucepan. For a sweet cider, add honey.
- * Warm the mixture gently over low heat until the cider begins to steam, about four minutes.
- * When hot, pour the mixture through a strainer into mugs and garnish each mug with an orange slice.

You can also add cinnamon heart candies for fun! Makes 4 servings.

This aromatic cup of apple cider is a perfect drink right by the fireplace on cold autumn nights!