

How To Use Parent-Teacher Conferences as a Tool to Help Children with ADHD

For many, parent-teacher conferences are a time of anxiety as we prepare our thoughts and possible concerns for back-to-school night. Parents with an ADHD child should be asking themselves, how do we extract the most value out of a 15-minute parent-teacher conference? The type of value that can truly provide children with ADHD the school support they need to succeed.

The following parent-teacher conference tips will benefit both the parents and children with ADHD:

1. Go with notes. Write down those academic and social areas that you believe are strong and some that are of concern. Also, talk to your child ahead of time to see if he admits areas causing anxiety.
2. Be aware of grades. If there is a subject that seems to be an area of struggle, ask the teacher what is being seen: missed assignments, failed tests, class participation, poor essay writing?
3. Ask about the teacher's view on your child's comprehension: following the directions on assignments, and engagement during class time?
4. Ask about both homework and class work completions: are they on time and done completely? Is he/she showing self-advocacy?
5. Are there areas of positive growth or talent? Reinforcing the positive in a child with ADHD can go a long way in promoting needed self-esteem.
6. Communication: What is the best way to set up consistent communication going forward: email, phone, communication log?
7. If your child has an IEP or 504, does the teacher know about it and has he/she read it? At this point, does the teacher see accommodations/modifications working? Is there a need for any tweaking from the teacher's point of view?

The main takeaways for parent-teacher conferences to help both parents and children with ADHD:

- Be prepared.
- Be proactive as you move the meeting in the direction of your concerns and need for information.
- Show receptiveness in suggestions from the teacher.
- Ensure consistent communication throughout the semester.

With some organization of your thoughts regarding what you need to know and what you need to communicate, you can extract the most value from your parent-teacher conference. Value that will best help the academic and social success of children with ADHD.