

BHERO's
Just in **TIME**

Parent-Teacher Conference TOOLKIT

RELATIONSHIP-BUILDING FOCUS

BHERO
TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE CENTER

GENERAL TIPS FOR CONFERENCES

- 1** Ongoing caregiver collaboration and conversation throughout the school year allows teachers to **create** and **continue** building relationships outside of the typical biannual Parent-Teacher Conference schedule.
- 2** Consider barriers families may encounter to participating in school-designated Parent-Teacher Conference times.
How does your school address these barriers?
How can you share those remedies with families prior to conferences?
- 3** Consider preconceived ideas about student families based on personal knowledge of the student, or even the experiences other colleagues have shared about the student, their siblings, or their caregivers.
How may these preconceptions influence interactions with families?
How might negative impacts of these perceptions be avoided?

BEFORE CONFERENCES

1 Share with students (and their caregivers) how **exciting** conference interactions can be. Letting students know that these interactions are **important, meaningful, and fun** can encourage them to share that with their caregivers. Sharing your enthusiasm with caregivers may also encourage them to participate.

2 Use the following questions to help frame your conferences, whether parent-, teacher-, or student-led. Consider:

What do you want caregivers to know about their student's academic progress?

This may include things like:

- Test scores & relation to grade-level standards
- Course progress
- Areas of strength
- Opportunities for growth & plans for growth - including what has already taken place

What do you want caregivers to know about their student's behavior in class?

This may include things like:

- Interactions with classmates
- Interactions with teacher(s) or other school staff
- Student attitude toward learning
- Engagement with course material

What do your students want their caregivers to know about their school experience?

This may include things like:

- Favorite subject/content area
- Student-perceived strengths
- Student-perceived barriers or areas of confusion

STUDENT-LED TIP

If conferences are student-led, consider providing students with a frame for outlining their progress, and allow them to practice in advance. You may even ask students to share this frame with their parents before conferences happen!

[This chart from Edutopia](#) may help guide some additional conversations during school conferences.

DURING CONFERENCES

1

Pace the interaction comfortably.

There may be a lot to discuss, but progress does not need to be crammed into a 15-minute time slot. Don't be afraid to schedule a follow-up visit if more time is needed to discuss student progress.

2

Lead with the positive!

Feedback research shows that growth is achieved with a minimum ratio of 4 positive remarks for every 1 negative remark. Try to share 4 positives about a student's progress for every concern or opportunity for growth. Strategies like "4 Stars and a Polisher" can be helpful in achieving this desired ratio in the conference setting.

3

Provide space for questions.

Ensure that caregivers have an opportunity to ask you any questions they may have - and do not be afraid to say, "I'm not sure," followed by, "but I'll search for that answer and get back to you." Just make sure to follow up!

AFTER CONFERENCES

1

Thank caregivers for their attendance at conferences and **consider reaching out** to those who did not make session times. Providing a brief update of their student's progress and alternate strategies for meeting may still allow for a connection to occur.

2

Reiterate to students that their conference interactions were meaningful, and provide students whose caregivers were unable to attend an **opportunity** to share and learn about their progress with you. Remember to **encourage** students who want to learn about their progress, rather than discourage them from seeking guidance because their caregivers did not attend conferences.

3

Follow up with any caregiver concerns or questions that were unable to be addressed during conferences.