

# Mastering Parent-Teacher Conferences

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It's that time of year again, parent-teacher conferences! Many parents may feel uncertain of what questions to ask or exactly what is the expectation at their child's grade level. Would you like to be more informed about your child's grade level curriculum, how it is determined and why your school may have so many early dismissals for professional days? We will try to answer all those questions in this article.....so here we go!

As a parent, attending a parent-teacher conference is just as important as sending your child to school everyday. Your child will see there is a partnership between you and their teacher and the main focus is for their success! You may receive your child's report card before the conference. Your child's report card is simply an outline of what skills need to be mastered at a certain grade level and/or semester, according to the state and town standards. While reviewing the report card, write any questions or concerns you may wish to share at the conference.

Let's begin with the first comment every parent is probably glad to hear - 'Your child is meeting the expectations at this grade level.' However, your next thought should be- How does the teacher know my child is meeting the expectations at this grade level? During the conference, you should be informed of the curriculum expectations for the semester, an explanation from the teacher how his/her lessons are meeting those curriculum expectations, documentation of the progress your child has made from the beginning of the semester to the present (ex. assessments, portfolio of class work, reports from other specialists) how your child's assessment results compare to local school scores and state standards, resources/materials used to support the curriculum and the individual goals for your child, and last but most important- activities you can do at home to help your child feel successful and promote the desire to be a life-long learner.

Upon receiving all this information, you should have a very accurate summary of how well your child is performing in his/her grade level. If your child is not meeting curriculum expectations, now is the opportunity to ask what type of intervention has been or will be offered to help your child succeed at his/her grade level. This intervention can come in the form of in-school support, after school programs, summer school programs and/or retention. Keeping in close contact with your child's teacher during the last few months of school will help you determine if your child has mastered his/her grade level and other options offered if mastery has not occurred.

Your child's curriculum is based on standards written by the state - which carefully reviewed the standards expected at the national level - and thus, the commitment to **leave no child behind**. The state provides a framework of standards to be met to ensure all children receive a public education that instills the knowledge and skills to become productive and responsible citizens. Your local schools are constantly editing and revising their curriculum to master the goal of leaving no child behind. You can visit the State of Connecticut Department of Education website: [www.state.ct.us/sde/index.html](http://www.state.ct.us/sde/index.html)

and click on Curriculum, which will take you to the Bureau of Curriculum and Instruction. At this web page, you can further investigate the 'Guide to Curriculum Development : Purposes, Practices, Procedure', 'CT Framework-K-12 Curricular Goals and Standards', and 'Framework Updates' (at this site you will see how the standards are constantly changing and why professional days are so important!). After viewing this website, you will understand the guidelines your child's teacher must follow and the importance of having the resources/materials necessary to get the job done. Also, as a parent, you will have the information necessary to observe if your child's school is fulfilling the necessary requirements/expectations mandatory of a public school.

Let's provide the following example:

One required framework of mathematics is for students to understand how quantitative relationships are represented by numbers. A subtopic to this is students should use numbers and their properties to compute flexibly and fluently and to reasonably estimate measures and quantities. This is a goal that is revisited in pre-k through grade 12 to build upon previously developed skills and to create the spiral effect of learning. A grade one teacher matches this objective to the grade one requirement of the student's ability to count by groups, add one more to the grouping, and compare values of groups. Your child's teacher plans to meet this objective by reviewing previous assessments to establish a 'starting point', using materials and resources which would be beneficial and support the child's learning style, and conduct assessments to determine if the objective was mastered.

We hope the information regarding parent-teacher conferences and curriculum is helpful. As Remedial Reading teachers, we enjoy working in the public school system and providing helpful information to parents and their children. If you have any topics you would like addressed in future articles, please send e-mail to Linda & Tricia at [LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com](mailto:LINDAMASSUCCI@aol.com)