

Conference Tips

At Murray Junior High School, Parent-Teacher Conferences are held three times a year, in the middle of each trimester: in October; January (or February); and April (or May). This is a very important opportunity for two-way communication with your children's teachers. Please note that Murray has a six period day, so each parent should plan on scheduling six conferences. Here are some ways to prepare that can help you get the most out of your conference:

- ❑ Ask your children what concerns they have that they'd like you to bring up. Ask what they expect you are going to hear – both the good news and any problems.
- ❑ Observe your children in terms of how much time they spend on homework, how much the homework challenges and engages them, and what interests they pursue on their own that might be used to re-enforce learning.
- ❑ Make note of how much time your children spend watching TV, playing video games, or talking on the phone. Parents often have a general idea, but are surprised when they actually keep track of the amount of time their kids spend in these ways.
- ❑ Listen to your children talk about friends or other aspects of their life, which may be having an impact on their school success.
- ❑ Prepare questions you want to be sure to have answered during the conference. Write them down. Try to limit yourself to the 3-5 most important questions to be sure that you have time for those to be addressed.
- ❑ Consider what you want to share with teachers about your children, or current conditions at home. This can help the teachers understand your children and better meet their needs.
- ❑ Be on time, as conferences are usually scheduled very closely together, and you will want the full amount of time the teachers have set aside for you.
- ❑ Go into each conference with confidence that you and the teacher share a common goal ... the best for your child. Conferences are a chance to increase communication and build partnership.
- ❑ If you can't make it for your scheduled time, call to re-schedule a time before or after school to talk to the teacher for a phone discussion. Teachers understand that sometimes emergencies come up, and will appreciate if you take the initiative to re-schedule.
- ❑ Find out how to continue communications with teachers between conferences. Conferences are an important chance to share key information, but on-going communication between you and your children's teachers is the way to build the partnership that your children need and deserve.



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