

Parent teacher meetings

provide opportunities to

- share information about your child's progress, interests, needs and wellbeing
- foster positive and respectful relationships between and home and school

They are not all about the problems! If you don't go to parent teacher meetings, you're also missing out on the chance to hear really positive things about your child that they may not tell you themselves. It's equally rewarding for teachers to share good news with a parent.



The information and knowledge shared together, and the relationship built between you and the teacher will support the learning outcomes of your child and assist in their success and the success of all students.

South Australian Association of School Parent Communities (SAASPC)

- promotes and develops the interest of parents in the education and general wellbeing of children at preschool and school
- develops and maintains contact with parent groups throughout the state
- acts as an advocate for parents on educational matters
- supports parents with information on parent group organisation and meeting procedure; the rights and responsibilities of parents in preschools and schools; the regulations, policies and programs of the SA Department for Education
- offers free information sessions to parents on *Reporting abuse and neglect* and *Principal/Director selection panel*



More information can be found at
www.saaspc.org.au



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Parent teacher meetings



Before the meeting

Be prepared

- Make a list of any specific questions you want to ask your child's teacher but keep them short and to the point
- Talk with your child before the interview to see if there is anything they would like you to tell the teacher. Find out if they have any worries or concerns and also what they like about school
- Is there anything about your child that you think the teacher should know e.g. health issues
- Sometimes things change at home – change of job, change in living or working arrangements, a sudden grief situation. These are important things for teachers to know so that they can support your child
- Compare the last two or three school reports
- Do you have a concern about a particular area of learning such as reading, maths, or social skills?
- If your child is to attend the meeting with you prepare them by talking with them about what you expect from them at the meeting
- Take a pen and paper with you in case you want to take notes
- Attend with a partner or a friend if you are nervous or unsure
- If you need a translator arrange this with your school before the interview

Punctuality

- Be on time
- Know where the meeting is to be held
- When you have more than one teacher to see, ask not to have appointments too close together – in case someone is running late
- If you have to cancel your appointment ring the school and let them know

At the meeting

Attitude

- Approach the interview with a positive and relaxed attitude and express your needs and concerns calmly
- See it as an opportunity for a two way discussion where you will be informed as well as contribute
- If there has been a problem in the past, strive to keep the lines of communication open and friendly
- Respect the teacher's professional skills and expertise
- If the teacher raises concerns don't get angry to defensive. Talking about concerns is the best way to make sure they are addressed
- End the meeting on a positive note by shaking hands and thanking the teacher

Communication

- Ask your prepared questions
- Let the teacher know about your child's interests, hobbies, strengths and areas where they may need extra encouragement
- Ask about the classroom rules and discipline, homework procedures and expectations for students
- Ask about your child's work habits, behaviour, participation and learning style
- Ask if they get along with others and if there is anything you should know about their social or emotional progress
- Express a willingness to help and share in solving any problems
- Ask the teacher what you can do at home to support your child's learning
- Ask if there is anything you don't understand either in the interview or in the written reports

After the meeting

- Speak honestly with your child about what you have discussed and how you can work together to improve their learning.
- Start straight away on any plans for improvement and be consistent. This helps show your child that you consider them important and that everyone (you, them and the teacher) needs to work together to make positive changes
- If you have a spouse or partner who was unable to attend the meeting fill them in on the information as soon as possible
- Don't leave it until you're upset or very worried before you contact the school
- Stay in touch with the teacher and when a concern arises, send a note, email or ring the school to say you need to chat. Give them some clue about your concerns, so they can prepare for your conversation. If, for example, you're worried your child isn't making friends, the teacher may want to observe them in the playground before you talk.

You may need to get others involved

If you've talked to the teacher and still aren't satisfied with the outcome, you can always make an appointment to discuss your concerns with the principal. You can bring a support person with you to any meeting at the school. If you need the help of an interpreter, let them know when you make the appointment, so they can arrange to have someone on the phone or at the meeting to help you. If you continue to have a problem, you can contact the Parent Complaint Unit hotline on 1800 677 435