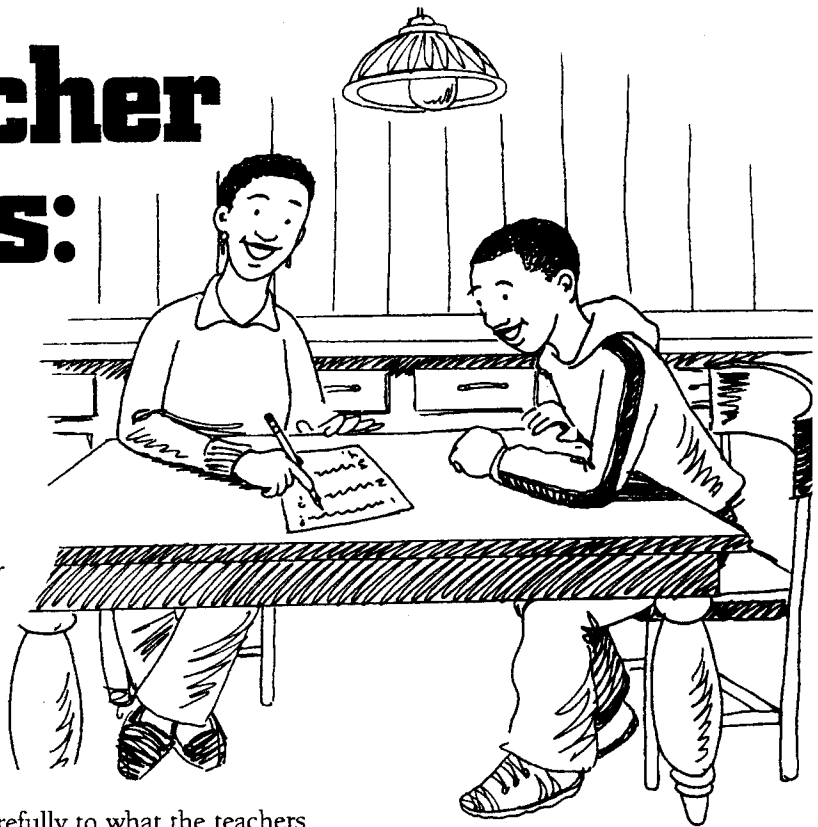


# Parent-Teacher Conferences:

*A Checklist  
for Success*

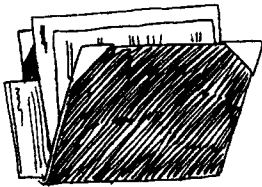
*for  
Parents*

It's that time of year again. You're invited to a parent-teacher conference. But don't panic! Plan ahead, and you'll find that this conference can be a first step toward cooperation between you and your child's teachers. The result? A more successful year for your middle grader!



## Before the conference

✓ Keep a folder about your middle grader with work samples, notes from conversations with teachers, and standardized test results. Look over your child's recent work to review his grades and see where he loses points.



✓ Ask your child about school. What are his favorite subjects? What is he having trouble with? Who are his friends? How does he get along with his teachers?

✓ List your middle grader's strengths and weaknesses. Note things that will help teachers know your child better, such as his hobbies or any stress he is under.

✓ Jot down the questions you want to ask. *Note:* For ideas, see "Questions to ask" to the right.

## At the conference

✓ Make a positive impression. Walk in with a smile, and be on time. *Tip:* It's best not to take younger children along.

✓ Listen carefully to what the teachers tell you. If you don't understand something, ask them to explain.

✓ Ask open-ended questions about your child's academic progress, social relationships, and behavior. Talk about your middle grader—ways he seems to learn best, what excites him about school, and what gives him trouble.

✓ Work with the teachers to develop an action plan to help your child succeed.

✓ Discuss the best way for you to monitor your child's progress. Plan to follow up with the teachers.

## After the conference

✓ Write the teachers a note or an e-mail thanking them for their time and suggestions.

✓ Discuss the conference with your middle grader. Tell him what the teachers said, and outline the action plan you and the teachers came up with.

✓ Put the plan into motion. Monitor your child's class work, homework, behavior, and mood. Stay in touch with his teachers.



## Questions to ask

Wondering what questions to ask at the conference? Try these for a start:

- What are my child's strengths and weaknesses in your class?
- Is my middle grader performing at grade level?
- Are his classes at the right level for him? Is he struggling in any of them? Is he challenged in all of them?
- Does my child need extra help in any subjects? Does he need help with his learning or test-taking skills? Are you concerned about any learning problems?
- Does he complete class work and homework on time? Does he participate in class discussions?
- How does he get along with his peers? Who does he hang out with?
- What can I do at home to help my middle grader succeed?

And if this is your child's first year in middle school:

- How is my child doing with the transition to middle school?

*Note:* We chose to use a boy in this report, but the examples apply to both boys and girls

## Middle Years