

1

Consider the time and place for a conversation

- Offer a mutually convenient time and place to have the conversation.
- Try to limit the possibility for interruptions and disruptions.
- Allow sufficient time for the conversation. Feeling rushed can limit the value of the meeting.

2

Plan the conversation

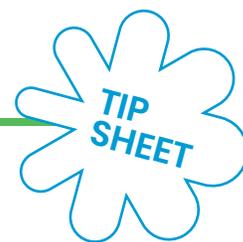
- Think of what you would like to share with the parent or family member. Consider writing it down and practice how you would like to share your observations at the meeting.
- Consider potential language or cultural differences as you reflect on the wording you might use.
- Avoid using acronyms or shorthand for describing what you are observing.



3

Build trust

- Begin the conversation by sharing the student's strengths and what they are doing well.
- Let parents / family members know that their child is welcomed in your classroom (e.g., "*I really enjoy having Sherna in my class this year. She has such a wonderful sense of humour*").
- Pause often, giving parents / family members the space to speak. Listen with interest to what they have to say. If a parent has a different view, allow them time to fully describe their concerns. Summarize what you have heard them say to check your understanding.



4

Remain neutral and non-judgmental in language

- Find neutral and non-judgmental ways of describing and discussing the student's behaviour by using factual and observable information (e.g., "I've noticed that Miguel is having a hard time settling in class. He is easily distracted and often has difficulty focusing. I'm wondering if you've noticed this at home").
- Hold your ideas lightly, and be open to different perspectives on what you are noticing.
- Avoid labels or mental health terms (e.g., depressed, anxious) to describe behaviour. Instead, describe in clear terms what you are observing (e.g., "Quinn appears sad in class lately. I have been curious about that, as it is impacting his friendships").

5

Partner with parents for solutions

- Invite parents / family members to authentically partner with you for a solution and help you understand what may support the student in other situations (e.g., "This is affecting Susan's learning in the class and I want to do all I can to help her to be successful. Do you have any suggestions? What might help Susan manage this? We can try a few strategies and then check in to see if we need to add to this or tweak the plan a bit based on how she is doing").
- Reassure parents / family members that you look forward to working together to support their child and let them know you will be following up with them as you work through the plan you discussed (e.g., "How about we check in again to see how things are going? What would work for you?").
- Inform parents / family members about resources available within the school and board, if further support is needed.



6

End the meeting on a positive note

- Wrap up the conversation by revisiting the student's strengths and reviewing the key features of the plan or agreed upon next steps.
- Recognize the important role parents play in their child's circle of support.
- Thank the parent / family members for meeting with you.

Note: educators should make sure they are talking with the custodial parent(s) / legal guardians ONLY about these sensitive issues (and other family members they may choose to invite).

