

Speaker 1 ([00:03](#)):

Welcome to Be Evolved, a podcast for parents and educators who prioritize developing possibility and expansion within the total educational process for themselves and their children or students. We invite you to listen to the podcast with your child or student in mind and with yourself at the center of the learning experience. Ultimately, our goal is to bridge the gap between educational expertise and research, translating it into practical action. Gaining knowledge plus taking action is what it means to be evolved. Hi everyone. It is October and fairly soon. Many of our families are going to be in parent teacher conferences. So today's episode is dedicated to five ways to make the most of these Parent-teacher conferences for any age. In fact, I'm going to give you actionable steps from our team to your home that you can take and ensure that you walk away from the conference with clarity, purpose, and a solid plan for your child or teens progress.

([01:14](#)):

So you're ready. Here we go. We're going to get right to it. So first of all, it is always a good idea to talk or play with your child ahead of the conference. The first step is meet with your child in a way that they like to engage with you. So for the youngest child, you might want to take out the Magna tiles, start building with them and strike up a conversation around, Hey, what's the first part of your day like at school? What's the playground like at your school? What are the other kids doing at your school? How do you like your teacher? And do this a couple of times before the conference for your middle elementary school age child or middle school child. You might be able to do this at dinner time. You may for your teenage need to be on a walk or in the car and have these kinds of conversations.

([02:09](#)):

But here's a couple of really great questions. You can say, what's your favorite part about school right now? Tell me more about that. What does that look like? What does it look like if I'm in your classroom? What are you actually doing? What's the homework been like? Has that been really independent for you, or do you feel as though that could be more challenging? Or you think it's about right? Is there anything that you find really hard? Is it really tricky? Somewhere in your day for your youngest kid you might say, is anything feeling bad about school? Is there anything that you wish you could change and wave a magic wand and make it different? Ask some really good questions and there's no playbook or textbook here. Go ahead and experiment with how you ask your child questions. It's part of your own learning experience as a parent to get even better at asking your child about their experience of life.

([03:03](#)):

How do you feel about your teacher? How do you feel about your classmates? Who do you spend time with? Why do you spend time with them? There are so many different types of questions you could be asking. Sometimes kids can be very straightforward in their response. Sometimes they can hold back, but even a small comment about their challenges or triumphs can really help you guide the conversation that you have with their teacher. So you might want to just take out your note section of your phone and just jot down a couple of things that your child has told you. Normally in the conference itself, you won't have a ton of time to be reporting back to the teacher. Oftentimes, what happens in these conferences most of the time is that the teacher is going to share with you how your child is doing in terms of academics, behavior, social interaction, social emotional and physical wellbeing and development.

([03:55](#)):

And you're going to be listening more than you're going to be talking most likely, although sometimes some schools give you some time to talk. So if you have time to talk, you could share back some of the experiences that your child is having. That's why that first step is so, so helpful. The second step to all of this is to get pretty good at listening. So you're already doing that with this podcast, so good job, but listen and record the conference in some way, right? Take some notes down or take pictures of certain work that they're showing you. I really recommend that you do record the conversation in some way because you

may miss some details. You may miss some of the words that the teachers are using. Maybe you don't understand every word the teacher is using, so you want to go back and look some things up, but certainly write some things down.

[\(04:42\)](#):

Teachers usually have limited time to cover everything. So if you're recording the session, you're not going to miss anything too important. Plus, when you go back, you'll be able to kind of focus on the details of what they talked about. So you can also ask some clarifying questions. So for example, if let's say the teacher says your child is struggling with some of the focus, you might say, what does that specifically look like? That question is really good. What does that specifically look like in the classroom? If I was watching my child, what would they be doing? What can I do at home to support the skills that you're working on in class is another really good question. So just remember this part of the parent conference work is your chance to get clear actionable insights into how your child is performing in school. So again, let's just review where we've been, right?

[\(05:35\)](#):

So number one, have a chat or a play with your child. Get some insight into how school's going. You might want to do this over a couple of days. Number two, go to the conference, get the information from the teacher, write down some notes, ask some clarifying questions. Get some ideas on what you could be doing at home to support the learning. And then my third piece of advice or step here is to go back to your child after this conference and just crosscheck some of the information that you learned and do this for the good things and for the things that perhaps are concerns that you need to push into. Now, here's where the parenting work that I've done and also that I advise through is probably going to come up for all of you. A child really needs to hear from their parents that there's unconditional love, that there's a sense of awe around how you see your child.

[\(06:34\)](#):

We want to be careful about how we're bringing up these challenges to them to preserve some of that relationship. So it's a good moment to also teach how you handle feedback from your boss or from your clients or from any relationship that you're in. And you can say, when people are sharing things with me that I need to improve on, sometimes I initially feel bad about that or I initially feel some shame around the fact that I didn't actually address that sooner, and that's okay. But really what I need to be doing is see this as an opportunity for me to grow because there's always going to be opportunities to grow. And you can share your experience because that's a good way to demonstrate through example how you hope your child can receive some of this crosscheck part of the conference work that we're doing here.

[\(07:25\)](#):

So we want to make sure that we report back to our child, but we certainly want to make sure it's done in a way that's going to facilitate their continued learning and growth and development. And it also can be done in a way that preserves our relationship with our child as the parent child relationship. So these are just some tools in the toolbox that you can put in and start to use to do some of this really important work. But you do need to crosscheck what you heard from the teacher because if this is your child's learning experience and you need to make sure that your child is aware of the feedback that they are getting from the teacher, and B, that they are part of the process of either enabling some of these strengths and also remediating or addressing some of these areas of challenge.

[\(08:15\)](#):

So you might say something like, your teacher says you're doing really well in math. How do you feel about that? And if your child gives you a one or two word answer, I feel great. Say, tell me more. What does math class look like? Really try to probe them to say more about that experience and let them talk, because that's how they're going to process that experience. So you don't have to tell them, for example, you're doing really well in math. This is a strength of yours instead, which you could say is, how do you

feel about that? They'll say, good. You'll say, tell me more about that. Well, in class we get to talk about the math problems and I really feel like I know what I'm doing. Yeah, that's what I heard. I heard you really know what you're doing. You're talking in math class a good amount.

[\(08:57\)](#):

I heard that all of that is happening. How does that make you feel? Let's go back to that. And your child might say, it actually makes me feel really good and capable in math. Yeah, that's how I feel. I feel like you're really capable in math. So I'm just repeating, but I'm extracting a little bit more and more and more. And by my child talking about it, that child can process the information that they are getting in the conference. So now if there's concerns, you can also bring those up and you can say, your teacher mentioned that focusing in class has been challenging. Does that sound right to you? And if you have built a base of relationship where your child can talk to you about their struggles and they're not necessarily hiding them from you or trying to present themselves as more capable than perhaps they are in this area, then they may be able to come to you and say, actually, yeah, that does sound right for me.

[\(09:52\)](#):

That is a challenge for me, and I think I need to kind of work on that. That's the ultimate place we'd like our kids to be. Now, that might come through some practice, and that's why this step I'm spending a little more time on because I want to urge you as parents to do some of this thought work around talking with your child about their challenges. It is important to talk to them about them, and being clear is very kind. So sharing where that feedback is coming up as a concern, but also doing it in a way that allows your child to participate in the learning around how to develop some of those skills. So it's really about opening a dialogue with your child that doesn't stop or start here. It's always going on. It's always just normalizing this process of, Hey, you have some feedback, you have some things to work on.

[\(10:39\)](#):

Let's put it together a plan. Let's try to figure this out. And emphasizing that there is such good in that process of continuing to strive for a evolutionary human experience, really learning how to learn for life in that way. So this is a really great piece of work right here that you can come and consult with us about. If you're not sure how to have this conversation, we can really help you by role playing and help you to connect with your child at any age. So there's different things you'll do at 3, 4, 5, 6 than what you'll do at ages 13, 14, 15, 16, 17. And I think some of that just comes in a construct of edit. So for a very young child, you don't need to necessarily be so forthcoming with every detail. Maybe you give them one major area to think about versus a child who's 17, maybe capable of handling multiple levels of feedback.

[\(11:36\)](#):

So that's another way of thinking about the way in which you might modify this for different age groups, but certainly the modality in which you have this conversation may also be different. A very young child can learn through play. So you might role play or get out some figures and pretend to be the teacher and show your child a little bit more about what they can be doing versus an older child, you might be able to abstract the conversation into the what if or how about this kind of idea. So number four, now you're going to decide as a parent what you want to amplify, accommodate, or remediate. Let me teach you about these words. So amplify are the positives or the areas in which you really want to address even. So it could be the items that came up that were very positive and exciting, and the areas maybe that came up that were more challenging that you really need to address.

[\(12:32\)](#):

So we're going to amplify these different areas. Now we're going to decide whether we're going to, with the areas of challenge, we can accommodate those things. Meaning we could sort of do a workaround. We can get a little assistance with a book on tape, or we could do a computer for writing, or we could use a calculator or we could get a homework helper assistant to help manage some of the executive functioning for the child. So just remember the accommodations are sort of doing for the child what the child is not

doing. And sometimes this is very appropriate. People might say, but wait a second, I'm supposed to be teaching my child to do all of these things. Yes. The idea though is that sometimes there's many, many, many, many things that a child needs to be able to do, and we need to just pick one or two things to work on, and the other things we might just accommodate until we get to them.

(13:22):

So re-mediating something is when we address something in direct explicit teaching, we bring it down to the skill level that needs to be taught at that instructional level. And this is where some nuances are determined through an educator who comes in and really can assess or test your child as they're actually working and we can help them to build the skills that they need and that they don't have. We build these lagging skills. So if they aren't writing a paper and that's the expectation, we might need to bring it back down to the paragraph level and teach them how to write a paragraph first. Then we can get up to writing a paper, and in the meantime, they might dictate a paper to us so that we can get it to the teacher in that particular expected form. So that's a way that we're using accommodation and remediation at the same time.

(14:12):

So it's important to know that this step often requires the involvement of educators because there are trained pieces that are needed here in order to action this particular step often. So we just need to also put together a plan of who's going to handle all of these things. So who's going to handle some of these areas of challenge? What kinds of classes maybe am I going to sign my child up to continue that interest that they showed in those kinds of things? So it's important just to be on step four here, right? Don't be afraid to leave certain problems on a to be addressed leader list. I call this the list of unsolved problems. I'm just going to put them down here, and I'm not going to necessarily address them right now. I know their problems, but I can only tackle so many pieces of learning at one time, especially as a family unit, we can't address everything at one time.

(15:04):

Our resources and our energy and our cognitive load in the brain won't allow us to do that. So we have to prioritize what's most important right now, get that going, and then we'll bring in the other pieces at a later time. So sometimes that's an important piece of decision that we're making. So the fifth area that you are going to work through with a parent conference is that you do want to monitor progress and hold accountable to make the most of these aftermath plans of parent-teacher conferences, we want to make sure that we can keep track of the action steps that you've decided on. How are you also going to hold your child and the school and those you've pulled in to support your child accountable for their part in the plan? So you might, for example, set up regular check-ins with the teacher, either an email or in person.

(15:48):

For older kids, you can set up a system where they track their progress in a planner or an app that gives them a sense of more ownership. The most important thing here is that you don't let the conversation end after the conference. That's the key. Really continue to revise the goals and feedback regularly so that your child stays on track. So to wrap up, the Parent Teacher Conference is one of the most important opportunities for you to get a holistic view of your child's academic, social, emotional, and physical development at school. It's also a way you can share what's going on at home with the teacher, and the teacher might be able to give you some advice or guidance as well by talking with your child beforehand, actively listening and recording that conference, sharing some of your perspectives and concerns to the teacher in that conference by reporting that experience back to your child, to crosscheck information by prioritizing feedback, and then by monitoring that progress and holding accountable, you can maximize the impact of these meetings.

(16:56):

So remember, this process is not just about solving problems and looking for the things that we need to hurry up and move forward. It's also about celebrating success and ensuring your child has the tools in their toolbox that they need in conversation with you in this collaboration with you as a parent to grow and thrive. And that means you as a parent need to have skills and you need to have support to go through this. I certainly could not go through this as a parent without the support of the educators in my life. I call them, as one of my brilliant teachers told me, this is your bench, right? These are the people on your bench are supporting you in your role of being a parent. Sometimes that's a couple of teachers that your child has. Sometimes it's a couple of coaches or a neuropsych evaluator or a speech and language provider, or a myriad of other folks on the bench.

(17:45):

Maybe it's your sister. Maybe it's the co-parent of yours. It is anything that sort of helps you along in your job. And certainly what evolved hopes is that we can be on your bench and that we can help you through the learning process of your child. We want to make sure that you have an opportunity to make the most of your Parent-Teacher conference because we feel partnerships with educators around a child is the most important thing to developing that total educational process where a child learns well at home and at school. So thanks for listening to today's episode. If you have any questions or if you want to dive deeper into this topic with either Caitlin Asan or Becky Reba, who are our directors of early and elementary education and middle high school college education, you can do so right now. I will make sure in the show notes their booking links are there, and if you want to have a consultation to talk through your child's parent-teacher conference and experience to gain some of these skills, especially towards the later part of that podcast series of steps three, four, and five, that's really what we are here to do to make the most of this experience for you.

(18:53):

Thanks for listening. Happy October. See you in November. And as always, we welcome your questions, ideas, and remarks on this show that we put together for you. Talk soon. And don't forget, make sure that your students in your life, including you, are learning and living well.

(19:16):

Thank you so much for joining us today on Be Evolved. We hope you learn something and that you can take direct action toward helping your student to learn. Well, if you enjoyed this content, please consider subscribing or writing a review. This is how this information gets to others who could benefit from it. Our education systems are complex, vast, and various, and the student, your parenting and teaching is unique. Thus, if you could benefit from one-to-one holistic guidance provided by educational experts, please visit us at [www.evolvededucationcompany.com](http://www.evolvededucationcompany.com). If you have any questions you'd like to ask or ideas for this show, please email us at [admin@evolveded.com](mailto:admin@evolveded.com). That's A-D-M-I-N at E-V-O-L-V-D ed.com. We are so pleased to serve you and connect you with the best educational expertise.