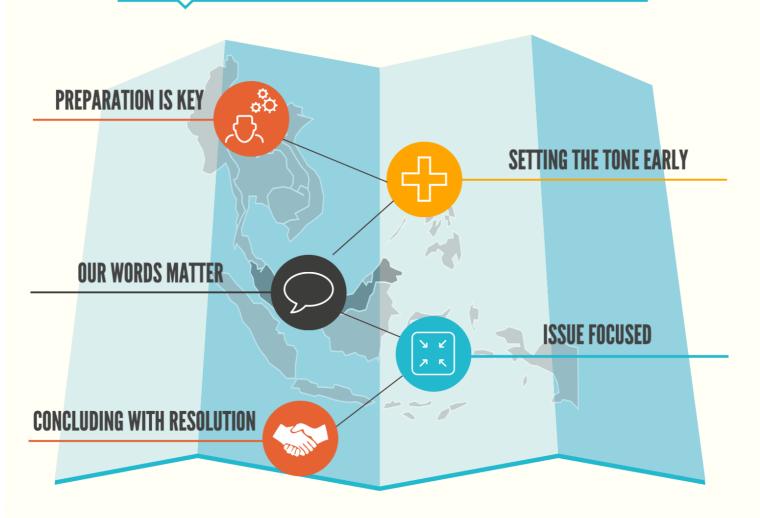
DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS WITH PARENTS: A ROAD MAP FOR SUCCESS



PREPARATION IS KEY

Expect The Unexpected.

The parent may need to bring children to the meeting, so prepare materials that their kids can use in the room to minimize distractions.

A parent may not have eaten before the meeting, so offering water and a snack can be seen as a helpful and welcoming gesture.

Have Visuals Available.

Have any student work or records available and organized that may be applicable to the meeting.

When discussing academics, having visuals like Bloom's Taxonomy printed and available. These can help parents better understand the learning process and how it relates to their child.

Prepare Yourself Emotionally.

It's difficult to not take comments personally. Though striving to receive feedback through a professional lens rather than a personal lens is crucial for maintaining a healthy conversation.

Consider what language you will to use defuse or conclude a meeting if it turns too emotional. This will help during the heat of the moment.

SET THE TONE EARLY

Yes, starting the meeting off with positive comments about their child is important. But your first message will be sent by your body language. Be proactive and deliberate in using positive body language when greeting your guests.

Be sure to set the tone for the meeting by creating and sharing a general agenda for the conversation. This helps to maintain some structure, which is essential for a productive talk.



Remember the basics. Eye contact, thanking them for joining you, and a firm handshake are essentials.

It's imperative that together, you and the parents identify a common goal for the student that relates to the issue at hand. This goal should be referred to throughout the meeting to maintain a focussed conversation. For example, "I know we both want Jackson to be a person who works well with others. Let's discuss how we can all work together so he can grow in this area."

ISSUE FOCUSED

Offer the option to the parents if they would like to begin sharing first or if they want you to. Explain that you would like to take notes to ensure that you understand them correctly.

It's easy to come to the table focussed only on what we will be sharing. Be sure to listen intently and openly to parents.

Who Starts.

Take Notes.

Listen. Really.

Conversations can
easily derail, that's why
it's important to stay
focused on the common
goal identified at the
beginning of the
meeting.

Common Goal Focus.

Maintain a healthy conversation by only discussing their child. If a parent wants to bring up another child, redirect them.

Just On Their Child.

Use "we" instead of "you" to emphasize that this will be a team effort.

Collective Team Effort.

OUR WORDS MATTER

HOW we share information with parents is just as important as WHAT we share



Remember To...

Begin w/Specific Compliments About Their Child

Use Affirmative Words
(Share What The Student IS Doing Instead Of What
The Student Is NOT Doing)

Speak To The Student's Behavior, Not The Student



Remember Not To Use...

Sarcasm

Absolutes (He always...She never...)

Education Jargon

CONCLUDING WITH RESOLUTION

Share the parent's concern back to them in your own words to ensure that they know you understand the concern.

Set 1-3 measurable and attainable short-term goals.

Determine HOW and WHEN you will discuss the student's progress to the goal(s).

Close with a specific compliment, positive body language, and firm handshake.

