Get Ready for the Conversation

A little preparation, a clearer conversation.

Choose what matters most for this conversation. You don't need to cover every mark or every classroom moment. Bring evidence, listen to the family's perspective and agree on a useful next step. [1–4]

Your preparation checklist

- [ ] Review the report and recent evidence of learning.
- [ ] Choose a strength and a specific example to share.
- [ ] Identify one priority and the support you have already tried.
- [ ] Invite the student to share a success, a challenge and a question.
- [ ] Prepare a question for the family.
- [ ] Confirm the time, format and any communication or accessibility supports.

Ask the student

"What are you proud of? What feels difficult? What would you like us to understand?"

Make room for the family

Ask what they hope to discuss. Confirm how they would prefer to communicate and arrange support through your school.

Use this kit your way.

Use the planning and meeting pages for each student. Follow your school's interview procedures and keep completed pages in your school-approved secure location.



Bring the student's perspective.

Learning Skills Portfolios give students prompts to reflect, set goals and describe their progress.
Available for Grades 1–3, 4–6 and 7–8. Optional paid resources.

Explore Learning Skills Portfolios ↗

Grades 1–3 Grades 4–6 Grades 7–8

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Prepare Your Student Overview

Bring clear examples and leave room for the family's perspective.

Student _____ Date _____

People attending _____

A strength to share

What is going well? Include a specific example.

A priority to discuss

What needs support? Note the evidence you will bring.

What I have tried

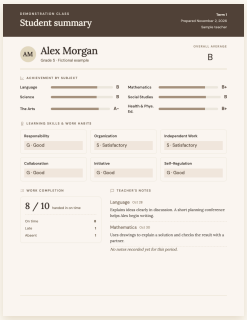
Which support helped? What did you notice?

The student's perspective

What feels successful or difficult to the student?

Questions for the family

What would you like to understand about their experience?



Bring your recorded observations together.

The Modern Teacher's Student Tracker includes a printable Student summary with achievement, learning skills and teacher notes. Review it before your meeting and choose what is relevant to share.

Explore The Modern Teacher ↗

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Words to Get You Started

A starting point for the conversations that need care.

Adapt these starters to your own voice. Use specific observations, explain unfamiliar terms and leave time for the family to speak. [2, 3]

01 Open with a strength

"One thing I've noticed about ___ is ___. A recent example was ___."

02 Explain a concern

"During ___, I'm noticing ___. So far, we've tried ___, and I've noticed ___."

03 Invite their perspective

"Does that sound familiar, or are you seeing something different at home?"

04 Include the student

"___ shared that ___. I'd like us to consider that as we plan."

05 Hear a different view

"Thank you for explaining that. Can you tell me more about ___?"

06 Leave room to check

"I want to give you an accurate answer. I'll check ___ and follow up by ___."

When the conversation needs more time

"This deserves more time than we have today. Let's arrange a follow-up so we can give it the attention it needs."

Ontario guidance behind this kit

Suggested framework informed by Ontario guidance. Follow your school and board procedures. Independent resource; no Ministry endorsement.

1. Ontario Ministry of Education: Growing Success (2010), with subsequent updates.
2. Ontario Ministry of Education: Parents in Partnership (2010).
3. Ontario Principals' Council: Parent Engagement handbook (2011), Sample 15, p. 71.
4. Halton District School Board: Report Cards.

Sources checked November 2, 2026. Provincial policy, professional guidance and a board example; these do not prescribe one interview agenda.

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Agree on a Next Step

Listen, choose a priority and make a plan together.

Student _____ Date _____

People attending _____

Record the family's perspective before deciding what comes next. Choose a manageable priority together. [2–4]

What the family wants us to understand

What the student wants support with

The priority we agreed on

What I'll do at school

Any home support we agreed on

What feels manageable for this family?

How we'll recognise progress

What will we look or listen for?

Reconnect by _____ How _____

"Before we finish, let's check that we have the same understanding of what happens next."

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