

BEAUTIFUL SAVIOR LUTHERAN SCHOOL

PRESENTS:

PEARLS OF LOVE AND LOGIC

Special Thoughts on Raising Kids

Parent/Teacher Conferences

Parent/teacher conferences can be an emotional time for both parties. It's not unusual for either parents or teachers to forget they are really on the same team—the child's team!

When both parties put forth their best communication and listening skills, these emotional battles can be replaced by the opportunity to share ideas that are in the student's best interest.

Conferences that are Guaranteed to Fail

When teachers and parents come to a meeting with a set notion of the child's problem and how to deal with it, the result is often a contest of words. Both parent and teacher waste a lot of time trying to persuade the other to understand and adopt their point of view.

The following are proven techniques that can end any progress during a conference:

Non-negotiable demands - A parent who demands, "I want Rachel transferred to a different reading group by Monday!" has effectively put an end to communication.

Threats - A teacher who threatens, "If Danny disrupts my class one more time, I'll send him to the principal's office every day for the rest of the month!" has not learned the art of either negotiation or communication.

Accusations - The statement, "If you would give Johnny more personal attention at home, his reading skills would be up to speed," is guaranteed to put a parent on the defensive.

Words that Work Wonders

Parents and teachers alike must remember the reason for meeting is to share ideas that will help the child overcome his or her school problems. People who get the best results during these conferences remember the magic words of good communication.

Describe the problem - When we use the word "describe," we open lines of communication by eliminating any judgmental statements. A wise parent says, "I'd like to describe how I see the problems Susie has been having in your class." A smart teacher says, "I'd like to describe how Lee acts around his classmates during recess."

Ask for the other person's thoughts - "I'd like to get your thoughts on that," are also magic words. They show we are more interested in learning all we can about the child's problem rather than trying to persuade the other party to see our side. The words also imply that we respect the other person's opinions.

Listen to the other person - Effective communication takes place only when people are convinced the other person is truly listening to them. Neither parent nor teacher should interrupt the other. Both need to be confident that their perceptions are being heard.

Develop several solutions - Coming up with more than one alternative to a problem—together—eliminates the temptation of trying to convince the other person to see the problem your way. It shows sincerity and openness about helping the child.

***Remember! Parents and Teachers are on the Same
Team—the Child's Team!***