

Reading Conferences

What should I talk about?

Every teacher faces the same dilemma when they begin teaching. They know individual reading conferences are beneficial to children. However, they often ponder: What will I do to make them meaningful? Here are some suggestions to get you started until the time when they come naturally:

1. Ask the student what they are reading. Have them tell you a little about the book (this will give you a quick check on the comprehension level.) Some teachers like to start their conferences with the phrase “How’s it going?”
2. Have the student read a passage from the book.
3. While they read, you are thinking of a specific praise and a teaching point. EVERY conference should have both! A specific praise is one thing you thought the child did well. This is important because you want to help build the child’s confidence in their reading ability. Next, you need to think of a teaching point. This is something you wish the child did better.

If you’re just beginning and need help with the specific praise and teaching point idea, we have compiled a list of ideas. This is not a comprehensive list, just a list to get you started. The more conferences you hold, the more these will pop into your head. Until then, use this as a guide.

1. Read fluently like you are speaking
2. Pay attention to punctuation marks (pauses, tone of voice for questioning, etc.)
3. Pace (slow down so that the listener can understand and you can comprehend)
4. Read through to the end of the word (don't leave off -s, -ing, etc.)
5. Chunk the word
6. Use phonics to sound out words
7. Expression
8. Volume
9. Reread for understanding
10. Choosing just right books
11. Making predictions, finding evidence to support predictions
12. Fact vs. Opinion
13. Context clues for new vocabulary words
14. Sensory images (What are you picturing in your head?)
15. What did you learn? (for nonfiction texts)
16. What is the main idea?
17. Using picture clues
18. Making connections (text to text, text to self, text to world)
19. How does the text make you feel?
20. What do you know about the character? (character traits)
21. What do you know about the character?
22. Where does the story take place?
23. What do you know about how the character solves the problem?