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Sample Questions to Discuss During Meetings with Parents⁹⁰



The first meeting between parents and teachers is important. Prepare for the meeting and arrange the most comfortable space and time possible for all those participating. A warm welcome and invitation to work together will help establish a positive rapport between teachers and parents. Here are sample questions for structuring the meeting.

General Information

- What do you think is important for me to know about your child, e.g., specific health problems, such as seizures, vision/hearing problems, heart problems, medications?
- What educational and social goals do you have for your child?
- When other children ask about your child's differences, what do you say?

Communication and Adaptations

- Did your child attend a special needs preschool?
- Has your child received special services in school before?
- Does your child require special therapy outside of school, such as speech/language, occupational/physical, counselling?
- What are some strategies you have found useful in working with your child?

Behaviour

- What interests, activities or hobbies does your child enjoy?
- Could you tell me about your child's behaviour challenges and what this might mean in my classroom?
- What causes your child to feel overwhelmed? How does your child react when he or she is frustrated or overstimulated?

Assessment and Evaluation

- Are there any reports or other information about your child that are important for me to have, e.g., What were you told about your child's diagnosis of FASD? Does your child have any additional diagnoses, such as attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)?
- Is your child able to work independently? For how long?
- In what areas has your child experienced particular success?
- What areas would you most like your child to succeed in this year?

Home and School

- Is there further information you feel I should know about the child, e.g., recent changes in the child's life, history of the child's living arrangements if adopted or in foster care?
- How can we work together to help your child learn? Are there ways we can be consistent at home and school?
- Are there any questions you would like to ask me, such as about classroom routines, activities or assessments?

90. Adapted from British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, *Teaching Students with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Effects: A Resource Guide for Teachers* (Victoria, BC: British Columbia Ministry of Education, Skills and Training, 1996), p. 72. Copyright © 2004 Province of British Columbia. All rights reserved. Reprinted with permission of the Province of British Columbia. www.ipp.gov.bc.ca

Enhancing Parent Involvement in the Individualized Program Plan (IPP) Process



Teachers can encourage parents to:

- ask questions if they need clarification about the purpose of IPPs or the IPP process
- specify how, and to what degree, they wish to become involved in the development of their children's IPPs
- contact the school if they have questions about upcoming IPP meetings, e.g., the agenda, who will be attending, or if there are specific persons that they would like to attend
- write down any questions they have
- ask for clarification if anything is unclear
- ask for a copy of the goals and objectives of draft IPPs so that they can familiarize themselves before meetings
- think of their children's strengths and areas of need, and write down goals and expectations that they would like to see included in IPPs
- inform the school of general health or medical concerns that they have for their children
- provide reports and other information about their children that they feel are important
- inform the school of professionals and agencies providing service to their children
- ask for clarification of IPP goals or objectives that are unclear so all IPP team members have a common understanding
- ask how to reinforce IPP goals at home
- discuss their children's involvement in the IPP process, and how that involvement might increase each year as children mature and gain skills
- contact the school if they have concerns, and request a review of IPPs if they believe changes are necessary.

Working with Parents



School staff can support parents in addressing the concerns, issues and challenges of raising and caring for children with special needs. Strategies are summarized below.

- Encourage parents to have a structured, consistent, predictable home environment. Share strategies and tips that have worked for other parents.
- Discuss the role of rules and expectations. Explain how they help create routines that increase compliance and self-management, both at home and school.
- Offer parents print and video resources that address concerns parents have identified.
- Encourage parents to maintain a consistent schedule for prescribed medications.
- Facilitate ongoing, open communication between home and school. This can be accomplished through weekly phone calls or using a communication book between home and school.
- Encourage parents to get accurate information from libraries, hotlines, community agencies or other sources.
- Encourage parents to talk to other families in the community who have children with special needs.
- Provide parents with information regarding network organizations and support groups in the community.
- Acknowledge and understand the difficult role of parents of children with special needs and support parents in this role.
- Assist parents in helping children develop appropriate social networks.

Home-School Communication Book⁹¹



Teachers and families may decide that a home-school communication system is beneficial. Use it to record relevant information that can be used to enhance instruction, manage behaviour or improve personal care of the student. Teachers and parents should determine what to include, and decide how frequently and by what means the communication book will travel back and forth. The style should be designed specifically for the individual students. The following example is adapted from an individualized communication book for a Grade 3 student.

Daily Log for Daniel

Date: _____

Comments/concerns/questions/friendly reminders from home:

Parent signature: _____

Participation in today's classroom activities

<i>Activity</i>	<i>Satisfactory participation</i>	<i>Partial participation</i>	<i>Did not participate</i>
Circle	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Music/Art	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Language Arts	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mathematics	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical Education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Social/Science	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Comments/concerns/questions/friendly reminders from school:

Teacher's signature: _____

91. Reproduced from Alberta Learning, *Teaching Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2003), p. 172.

Environmental Scan of the Classroom



Use the following questions to assess how the physical set-up of the classroom accommodates the needs of students with special needs, particularly students with attention problems.

Boot room

- Is there adequate and clearly labelled storage for students' outside clothes, backpacks and lunch bags?
- Is there adequate space so students can remove or put on outer clothes without crowding?
- Is the coat area easy to supervise and located close to the teaching area?

Student desks

- Does the desk arrangement allow all students to:
 - see the teaching area
 - participate in class discussion
 - have adequate space to work independently?
- Are there particular seating spots that accommodate students with major attention difficulties?
- Are student desks the appropriate size and in good repair?

Storage of equipment and material

- Is there a designated area for students to put their homework books at the beginning of the school day?
- Is there adequate storage for students' personal school supplies?
- Is shelving organized and clutter-free?
- Are storage areas labelled so students can find and return materials independently?
- Is there a storage area where materials and equipment can be stored out of sight?
- Are books displayed so students can see covers and are encouraged to read?

Work areas

- Are the areas in the classroom clearly defined?
- Is a private, secluded space available where students can work quietly by themselves or use as a safe place to calm down?

Physical set-up of the classroom

- Do the colours of the room create a calming, harmonious environment?
- Does the furniture arrangement allow for good traffic flow?
- Are the major traffic areas located away from the main work area?
- Do wall displays contribute to a sense of order?
- Are non-essential decorations kept to a minimum?
- Are all areas of the classroom visible to the teacher so they can be monitored and supervised throughout the school day?

Sound

- Do the acoustics allow teachers and students to clearly and easily hear one another when speaking at normal conversational volume?
- Are carpeting or chair leg protectors used to muffle the noise of moving chairs and desks?
- Are there clear classroom expectations about talking during activities?
- Is music used to cue transitions and provide a calming background to enhance students' ability to focus on specific tasks?
- Are sounds from the hallway and windows sufficiently muffled?
- Is the school-wide messaging system used at set times during the day so teachers can encourage students to focus listening?
- Is the sound quality of the intercom clear and at an appropriate volume?
- Is there minimal sound from lights and the heating system?

Lighting

- Are lights in good repair with minimal humming and flickering?
- Is the lighting adequate for a range of learning activities?

Visual cues

- Are signs and pictures at the eye level of students?
- Is an easy-to-read daily schedule clearly visible?
- Are classroom rules written in positive language and posted for easy reference?
- Are classroom supplies and equipment clearly labelled to establish ownership, and facilitate retrieval and storage?
- Are only essential visuals posted?
- Are the visual cues in the classroom student-friendly and consistent with learning?

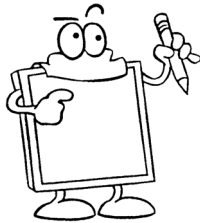
Getting Along With Others Inventory⁹²



Use inventory questions to help individual students identify and explore how they get along with others.

Name: _____

Date: _____



In class

	always	usually	sometimes	not yet
• I come to class on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I bring the books and supplies that I will need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I say hello to other students as I go into the classroom.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I answer questions with a few sentences.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• When I start a conversation, I check that other people seem interested.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I limit small talk to before and after class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I sit up straight.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I take off distracting hoods and hats.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I make eye contact with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I show good listening by nodding my head and turning to the speaker.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I volunteer at least two answers per class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• If I've missed directions, I look to other students for clues.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

With partners and in small groups

• I work with a variety of partners.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I try to make others feel comfortable by making small talk.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I show that I want to work with others by moving closer.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

92. Adapted from Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), pp. 95–96.

Appendix A7 (continued)

	always	usually	sometimes	not yet
• I am polite to people I would rather not work with.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I listen carefully to directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I talk over directions with my partners to make sure we all understand.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I make a rough plan.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I check the deadlines.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I use a quiet voice.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I stay with my group and focus on the task.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I don't complain about the assignment.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I do my share of the work.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I volunteer ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I show good listening.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I encourage others to share their ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I don't put down other people's ideas.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I am willing to try new roles, even if I'm uncomfortable.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
• I support my partners in group presentations.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Getting connected

• I participate in at least one extracurricular activity each term.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Explaining FASD to Your Child⁹³


 Tips for Parents

- There is no best time or way to tell children about FASD. As parents, you know your children best. Some parents choose to tell their children early, even before the age of five. Children that young may have limited understanding of what FASD means, but telling children early can make it easier to talk about it as they grow older because the topic and words have been introduced.
- School-aged children may understand simple explanations of the condition and want to know what is different about their bodies. Children may be concerned about what caused their difficulties, and if other children have FASD or if they are the only ones. They may find it helpful to know that others have felt the way they do.
- Emphasize the positive. Point out strengths, special talents and gifts your children bring to their families and friends.
- Explain that each person learns at his or her own speed, in his or her own way—some children learn best by listening to material, and others by reading or looking at things. Emphasize that you will help learn what works best.
- Help children understand their experiences by comparing them to something familiar. For example: “Your brain is like a radio with too much noise. We have to tune in the way you learn, just like we tune in the music clearly.”
- Be cautious using medical pictures of the brain meant for adults. They can be overwhelming and confusing to children.
- Many children and teenagers with FASD are relieved to find out the cause of their problems, but may also be sad or angry. Help them talk about and deal with whatever feelings they are having.
- If you have FASD yourself, talk about this as an example of how challenges can be overcome.
- Explain that your children are not alone. Grandparents, siblings, teachers and parents are all there to listen and help with problems.
- Talk about the help your children will have—resource teachers, homework program, after-school program. Be realistic, positive and specific.
- Ask teachers for tips for coping, organization and time-management skills, such as homework books, cue cards and study notes. Use the same strategies used in the classroom. Success will increase children’s confidence in their own abilities.

93. Adapted with permission from Diane Knight, “Families of Students with Learning Disabilities,” in William N. Bender (ed.), *Professional Issues in Learning Disabilities: Practical Strategies and Relevant Research Findings* (Austin, TX: Pro-Ed, 1999), p. 277; from Robin A. LaDue, *A Practical Native American Guide for Caregivers of Children, Adolescents, and Adults with Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and Alcohol-related Conditions* (Juneau, AK: Office of FAS, Department of Health and Social Services, State of Alaska, 1999), p. 85 (this document is in the public domain) AND from Antonia Rathbun, “Talking About FAS/FAE With Children,” *About FAS/E: A Publication of the FAS/E Support Network of B.C.*, February 2001, pp. 10, 15, 16.

Appendix A8 (continued)

- Be prepared to answer the question “Will it go away?” Be honest and encouraging. For example, “Some things might change and some won’t. Your ears might always hear noises louder than mine. You might always like reading better than math. But there are lots of things we can do to make learning math easier.”
- Repeated questions about why their birth mothers drank during pregnancy may indicate children are struggling to accept that they were hurt by someone they depended on. It is less about why, and more about how sad and frustrated they feel when things are hard for them. They need honest encouragement and reassurance more than technical explanations. Answer simply, then ask what it’s like for them. Also explain that no mother intentionally tries to hurt her baby. She may have been unaware of the consequences of drinking alcohol to her unborn baby, or may have had an illness or disability herself and could not control her drinking.
- Talk about ways to handle teasing from peers. Practise responses through role-play.
- Older children may want to know what to tell friends if they ask about FASD. Children will vary in their choices about what they want others to know. Some children may want only certain people to know. As one young man with FASD said, “I want helpers to know but I don’t want kids to, because they would tease me.” Respect these choices.
- Teenagers may benefit from talking with other teens and adults who are successfully dealing with the same condition. They may feel less alone and can learn from role models. Peer support groups can provide ongoing encouragement and a chance to learn about individual differences.
- At all ages, children feel more powerful when they help create solutions for dealing with their challenges. For example, children could turn the radio on between stations to create white noise for sleeping or design posters with pictures of the items they need to pack in their backpacks each morning before leaving for school.
- Look for resources—organizations, books and videos that provide support and information. Help children use these resources and become personal advocates for their education.
- Encourage children to help plan their education programs by participating in IPP conferences and setting realistic long-term goals as they progress in school. Remind children of all the options they have for the future—high school diploma, post-secondary training, employment.
- Be willing and able, time and again, to discuss the issue.
- Give children the message that you care about them and love them as they are.
- Children and teenagers can be sensitive about their physical appearance. As part of the assessment process, they might have their eyes measured and other facial features evaluated. This may leave them feeling uncomfortable and self-conscious. They may worry that others know they have FASD just by looking at them. Emphasize they are attractive, and their friends and family members typically will not know they have FASD just by looking at them.

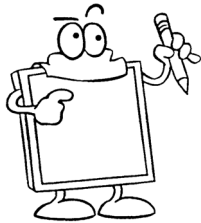
Learning Challenges Inventory⁹⁴



Use inventory questions to help individual students identify and explore specific learning challenges.

Name: _____

Date: _____



		always	usually	sometimes	not yet
1.	I come to class on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	I come to class with the materials I need, such as pencil paper and textbooks.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	I come to class prepared; e.g., textbook read, assignments complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	I can follow written directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	I can follow spoken directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	I understand the new ideas the teacher presents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	I pay attention in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	I add to class discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	I take good class notes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	My notebooks are organized and complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	My written work is accurate, neat and organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	I finish assignments on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	I know when and who to ask for help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

94. Adapted from Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), p. 82.

Appendix A9 (continued)

	always	usually	sometimes	not yet
14. I can sit still for long periods of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I do not distract or chat with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I stay calm and focused during tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I do well on tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Self-advocacy Checklist⁹⁵

Use questions to help individual students identify and build on self-advocacy skills.

- I know what FASD is.
- I attend my IPP meetings.
- I let people know what I am thinking at my IPP meetings.
- I ask for help when I need it.
- I ask questions in class.
- I have started to take on more difficult tasks in school.
- I hand in all my homework on time.
- I am proud of myself and don't let others tease me.
- My calendar, binders and notebooks are organized.
- I have learned new ways to study for tests.
- I make an effort to be a good friend to others.
- I set goals for myself.

95. Adapted with permission from Howard Eaton and Leslie Coull, *Transitions to High School: Self-advocacy Handbook for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (Vancouver, BC: Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd., 2000), p. 57.