

Conflict to Collaboration Workbook

Positive Discipline IN THE MONTESSORI CLASSROOM



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Two Lists

"The only normal people are the ones you don't know very well." ~ Alfred Adler

Stressors	What We Want

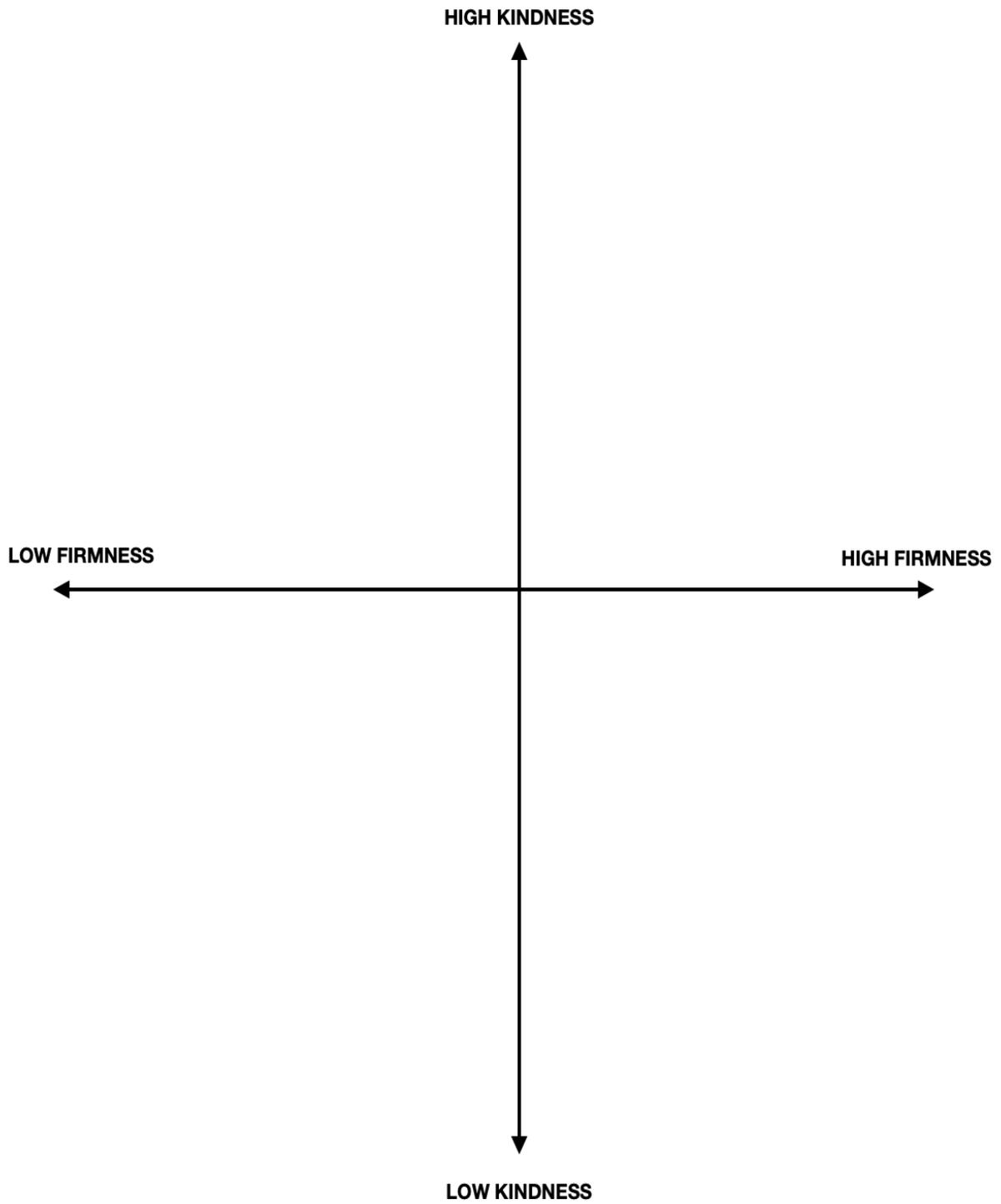
Adlerian Principles

"There is a Law that man should love his neighbor as himself. In a few hundred years it should be as natural to mankind as breathing or the upright gait; but if he does not learn it he must perish." ~ Alfred Adler

1. Humans are social beings.
2. Behavior is goal oriented.
3. The primary social goal of human beings is to find a sense of belonging and significance.
4. A misbehaving person is a discouraged person.
5. Social interest = belonging and significance.
6. Equality.
7. Encouragement.
8. Mistakes are an opportunity to learn and grow.
9. Connection before correction.
10. Effective leadership and communication is kind and firm at the same time.

Kind and Firm Chart

Based on the work of E.E. Maccoby, J.A. Martin, and Diana Baumrind



Session 1 Journal Reflection

1. Review the list of *Stressors* from the *Two Lists* activity in session one (at the beginning of this workbook). Make a list of ways that teacher/leaders might invite some of these behaviors from parents. See the chart below.
2. Review the list of *What We Want* from the *Two Lists* activity in session one (at the beginning of this workbook). Make a list of ways that teacher/leaders might invite some of these behaviors from parents. See the chart below.
3. Add your responses to the group chat.

Invite Stressors	Invite What We Want



If you like me



Just LET ME
do it for you!!!

Please cut in
front of me.



If you don't like
what you see
wait a minute, I'll CHANGE



YOU SHOULD KNOW
WHAT I WANT. I
SHOULDN'T HAVE
TO TELL YOU

I HOPE you
APPRECIATE
all I DO for
YOU



Help!!!

I can't say NO

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Just



Hassles be
GONE



Just let
THEM do it



Nothing gonna change
—MY WORLD—

Don't forget
to smell the
ROSES



I DON'T WANT TO.



GO AHEAD AND CHANGE. BUT DON'T ASK ME TO



CHECK WITH US TOMORROW.

We'll still be here.



What's the **HURRY?**

Let me **THINK.**
ABOUT it.



RELAX!

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Don't WORRY

I'LL EXPLAIN
EVERYTHING
TO YOU.



Just DO IT
my way!!!

*I can give up
CONTROL,
as long as
I can control what
I give up.*



I have a
LIST for
THAT.

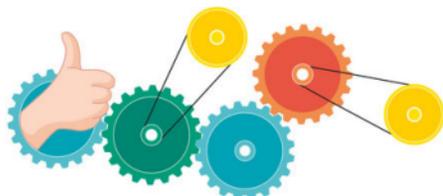
**HERE I COME
TO SAVE THE DAY!**



Plan.
Prepare.
Worry anyway.



Don't bother to think.
I've done all the
THINKING for you.



with **ORGANIZATION**
and **STRUCTURE**.



When I want your
opinion, I'll give it to you.

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I intend to make a
difference in the world.
IT'S IMPORTANT!

JUST DO IT! (right)



Never mind. I'll do it.



I have **bossy pants**
and I am not afraid
to **use** them-



DON'T WORRY



I criticize myself too.



If you want to **HELP**,
DO IT MY WAY.



Oh goodie, Now I
have something
else to add to my
list of projects.

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Top Card Chart

I'd rather seek:	Than experience:	Even if I suffer:	Invites from others:	What I really want is:	Pluses and minuses
Superiority	Meaninglessness Unimportance	Becoming overworked, overwhelmed, or overburdened.	Feelings of Inspiration or Feelings of Inadequacy	To use my teaching skills. To do it right in order to be meaningful. Appreciation. To avoid being wrong and exposing insecurities.	No one inspires children to achieve more, but when I feel discouraged, no one invites you to feel so insignificant.
Control	Criticism Ridicule	Social or emotional distance.	Feelings of Security or Power Struggles	To be efficient. To gain respect, cooperation, and loyalty. For others to have faith in me.	No one is more efficient, when feeling encouraged, and no one can be more defensive or critical when feeling discouraged.
Pleasing	Rejection Abandonment	Loss of sense of self and what pleases me.	Feelings of Acceptance or Revenge	To help everyone feel special. To be liked and appreciated. For others to know what I want without me having to tell them.	No one is more encouraging to be with until my line has been crossed, and then no one is more rejecting.
Comfort	Stress Pain	Lack of productivity. Lack of advancement and personal growth.	Feelings of Support or Undue Attention Special Service	For things to be as easy as they look. To be left alone, and to have my own space and pace. I don't want to argue.	No one is more supportive or easier to be with until my discomfort is seen as stubborn, and then no one can invite you to feel more annoyed

By Lynn Lott and Jane Nelsen (based in part on the work of Steve Cunningham)

Top Card Communication Activity Instructions

1. Join your *Top Card* group.
2. Choose one person to be the scribe for your group, and one person to be the spokesperson. The scribe will record the answers for the brainstorm. The spokesperson will share the findings of your *Top Card* group with the whole group.
3. Scribe: Record all the responses for your group.
4. Together, brainstorm a list of communication challenges for your *Top Card* lifestyle. The scribe should record the ideas in the first column of the chart paper. Group participants can record the ideas on the *Top Card Communication Activity Chart* on the next page.
5. Together, brainstorm a list of communication strengths for your *Top Card* lifestyle. The scribe should record the ideas in the second column of the chart paper. Group participants can record ideas on the *Top Card Communication Activity Chart* on the next page.
6. Review the list of strengths and challenges on the "Top Card Communication Strengths and Challenges" on the page after the *Top Card Activity Chart* and add any strengths or challenges from this list that you feel fit your style.
7. Develop a motto or bumper sticker for your *Top Card*. Humor is encouraged. The scribe should record the motto on the chart paper. Group members can record the motto on the *Top Card Activity Chart* on the next page.

Top Card Communication Activity Chart

My Top Card (first choice) _____

My Style (second choice) _____

Communication Challenges	Communication Strengths

Life Motto for My Top Card: _____

Top Card Communication Strengths and Challenges

(adapted from *Top Card Strengths and Challenges, Practitioner's Class Workbook*)

	Strengths	Challenges
COMFORT	Easy to talk to. Gentle. Good listeners. Calm and reassuring. Easily satisfied. Flexible. Content. Dependable and persistent. Supportive. Encouraging. Diplomatic. Patient. Adaptable to different social contexts. Diplomatic. Stable. Wants other people to feel comfortable too.	Shies away from stressful conversations and necessary conflict. Passive. Slow to make decisions. Avoids change. Withdraws from conflict when feeling cornered. Indirect. Over politeness can create ambiguity. Hesitant to initiate conversations. Poor boundaries.
CONTROL	Clear, accurate and direct communication. Organized and detail oriented. Good systems builder. Good follow-through. Consistent and reliable messaging. Organized and goal-focused in discussions. Persistent. Calm under pressure. Faithful. Plans ahead. Helps others feel taken care of. Respectful of roles – good boundaries. Keen observer.	Rigid and inflexible. Corrects others in conversation. Too detail oriented. Lacks flexibility and spontaneity. Lack awareness of the needs of others. May create social and emotional distance. Can be defensive. Difficulty letting go. Prioritize order and tasks over relationships. Unwittingly invites rebellion or power struggles.
SUPERIORITY	Confident and persuasive expression. Knowledgeable and informed communication. Altruistic. Generous. Self-confident. Strategic and decisive. High standards for communication. Open to new possibilities. Direct. Goal oriented. Assertive and determined. Clear sense of purpose.	Underestimates abilities of others. Likes being the best. Likes to be right or avoid being wrong. Critical (of self and others). Unwittingly invites others to feel inadequate. May dominate the conversation. Can overlook feelings of others. Over focus on outcomes.
PLEASEING	Creates trust and harmony. Empathetic and sensitive. Diplomatic. Good listeners. Encouraging and affirming. Adaptable. Flexible. Accepting of others. Cooperative. Avoids creating conflict. Giving. Willing to help. Warm communicator. Considerate. Peacemaker. Compromiser. Supportive.	Prioritizes approval over authenticity. May give dishonest response in attempt to please. Avoids difficult conversations. Gives in and compromises too much and then feels resentful. Passive. Indecisive. Avoids sharing honest opinions or ideas. Poor boundaries. Neglects own needs. Over accommodating.

Parent Communication Styles

Analytical (Most Like Control)	Driver (Most Like Superiority)
<p>Fact focused Accuracy oriented Organized Systematic Thoughtful Serious Controlled Stand-offish Persistent Critical</p> <p>Conflict: Avoidant Decide: Slowly Values: Accuracy and facts</p>	<p>Goal focused Results oriented Candid Strong-willed Direct Practical In-charge Aggressive Abrupt Independent</p> <p>Conflict: Comfortable Decides: Quickly Values: Actions and results</p>
Amiable (Most Like Comfort)	Expressive (Most Like Pleasing)
<p>Security focused Relationship oriented Tentative Cooperative Personable Unsure Pliable Agreeable Supportive Respectful</p> <p>Conflict: Avoidant Decides: Slowly Values: Security and harmony</p>	<p>Feeling focused Future/big-picture oriented Sociable Imaginative Conceptual Enthusiastic Undisciplined Engaging Impulsive Unrealistic</p> <p>Conflict: Comfortable Decides: Quickly Values: Approval and creativity</p>

Supporting Communication Styles

Style	Values	Build Trust	Communicate
Driver	Action and results.	<p>Focus on solutions. Give appropriate control. Be prepared and confident – you’re the expert. If you don’t know, find out.</p> <p>Encouragement: Decisions</p>	<p>Communicate frankly and openly. Share challenges and clear solutions. Give choices and alternatives. Don’t get bogged down in details. Keep meetings short and sweet. Communicate expectations for outcomes. Avoid small talk. Plan follow-up.</p>
Analytical	Accuracy and facts.	<p>Offer structure. Use a systematic approach to problem-solving. Provide observations and research.</p> <p>Encouragement: Insight</p>	<p>Listen attentively. Share facts and evidence in a structured manor. Communicate clear goals and expectations for outcomes, and how you will measure them. Allow time to digest information. Avoid emotional appeals. Plan follow-up.</p>
Expressive	Approval and creativity.	<p>Focus on connection and collaboration. Affirm feelings. Emphasize hope for the future.</p> <p>Encouragement: Validate</p>	<p>Listen reflectively. show genuine interest. Use imagery or visuals. Share stories/anecdotes. Avoid dry details and too much research. Give them an opportunity to express themselves. Show receptivity to their ideas. Share goals for the future. Plan follow-up.</p>
Amiable	Security and harmony.	<p>Take small steps. Keep pace slow and steady. Offer realistic reassurance and support. Involve them.</p> <p>Encouragement: Progress</p>	<p>Actively listen. Take time for small talk. Communicate consideration how decisions will impact stakeholders. Share information clearly and simply. Prioritize solutions and start slowly. Allow time for decisions. Ask for help in implementation. Plan follow-up.</p>

Communication Styles Reflection

1. Identify a parent that you had communication challenges with.
2. Briefly describe the issue at hand.
3. What were the communication challenges?
4. How might your Top Card have played into communication challenges?
5. Which of the four-communication style do you think the parent(s) had? Why?
6. Share this information with your partner.
7. With the help of your partner, outline how you might communicate with this parent going forward. Or, if they are no longer in your class, what advice would you give the next teacher?
8. What did you discover?

Session 2 Reflection – Part I

1. Review the list of communication strengths for your top card. Record them on the chart below. Add more that might be specific to you, personally.
2. Consider how you can use your Adlerian lifestyle strengths to support trusting communication with the parents in your classroom or school. Be as specific as possible. For example, if your strength is collaboration, a specific way to use that strength might be to create classroom parent committee to help you and the children prepare for a holiday celebration.
3. Add your responses to the group chat.

Communication Strengths	Using Your Strengths

Session 2 Journal Reflection – Part II

1. Go to Session 2 on the Learning Platform. You will find two online resources for identifying your Adlerian personality and communication style. Now, with more time to reflect, take each "quiz".
2. Did you come up with the same personality style?
3. What is your communication style?
4. Knowing your personality style and communication style, what advice would you give to a colleague on how to give you feedback (constructive criticism)?
5. Knowing your personality style and communication style, what would you tell a colleague who asked you, "How can I best support you when you are under stress?"

Connection Brainstorm

1. Record the groups ideas for establishing connection with parents in your class/school.

Getting to Know You

Of all things, love is the most potent. ~ Maria Montessori

An incalculable amount of tension and useless effort would be spared in this world if we realized that cooperation and love can never be won by force ~ Alfred Adler

Develop a short interview to conduct with the parents of students in your classroom:

1. Create 3 questions about their child. Consider questions that will invite open discussion and give you insight into the child from the parents' perspective.
2. Create 3 questions about the parents. Consider questions that will invite open discussion and give you insight into the parents' values, priorities and communication style.
3. Most all parents want to contribute to the community in some way. Contribution = connection! It's your job to find out what, when and how they would like to share their time and talent with your classroom/school. Create a few questions that will glean this vital information!

Child

Question 1: _____?

Question 2: _____?

Question 3: _____?

Parent(s)

Question 1: _____?

Question 2: _____?

Question 3: _____?

Family Contribution

Question 1: _____?

Question 2: _____?

Question 3: _____?

4. When you are finished creating your interview questions share your questions with your partner.
5. Role-play this interview with your partner or group. Take turns asking each other the interview questions you created.
6. While you were playing the parent, what were you feeling when you answered the interview questions? What decisions were you making?
7. What insights did you have during the role-play?

Encouragement vs. Praise for Parents

"Those things which we call encouragement, comfort, love, respect, are drawn from the soul of man, and the more freely we give of them, the more do we renew and reinvigorate life about us." ~ Maria Montessori

Praise	Encouragement
That's awesome!	You must have given that a lot of thought.
You are a great mom/dad.	You seem to take a lot of care in supporting Marianna's independence.
Good job!	I noticed you let him figure that out for himself.
That's so wonderful.	Tell me about that.
I love it!	What do you think about it?
You took my advice!	How are you feeling about that?
She looks so cute in that tiara.	I appreciate how you let her make her own choices.
You are so dedicated.	Your involvement really makes difference.
That's an amazing idea.	Thank you for sharing that idea with me.
That was the best auction ever.	You put in a lot of effort and the auction was a big success. Thank you.
You remembered rain jackets!	You work so hard to make sure they are ready.
You're so talented.	I couldn't have done that without your support.
You're some of the best parents.	Thank you for being a part of our community.
I'm impressed.	You must feel very proud.

Creating Encouragement Statements

Principles of Verbal Encouragement

Encouragement focuses on:

1. Process
2. Effort
3. The deed not the doer
4. Improvement
5. Trust

Using the principles for encouragement statements (page 92 or *Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom*) to turn praise statements into encouragement statements.

Praise	Encouragement

Session 3 Journal Reflection

1. Review the *Supporting Communication Styles* chart.
2. Create a few encouragement statements for each communication style.

Analytical	Driver
Amiable	Expressive

My Task vs. Your Task

1. Take a few minutes and review each of the following scenarios.
2. Consider what your task is in each situation and what the parent’s task is in each situation. Record your reflections below.

Scenario	My Task - Teacher	Your Task - Parent
The parent requests extra help for their child after school.		
The parent demands daily updates on their child’s behavior.		
The parent asks that their child be separated from another child during the day.		
A real situation from your classroom or school.		

Group Reflection

1. Did you feel pressured to take on the parent’s task?
2. How might claiming only your task in a situation reduce your stress and improve communication?

Kind and Firm Boundaries

Acknowledge the Parent's Concern (Connection Before Correction)

Validate their feelings or commitment.

"I really appreciate how committed you are to your child's learning."

"I understand you want to stay informed about your child's progress."

State the Boundary Clearly (Kind and Firm)

Be honest about what is possible within your role and the classroom context.

"I cannot stay after school every day because I need to focus on all the children."

"Sending daily updates would be difficult without taking time away from the classroom."

Offer an Alternative (Focus on Solutions)

Suggest options that are reasonable and maintain connection.

"I can offer extra support once a week and share strategies you can try at home."

"I can send a weekly summary and notify you immediately if there are major concerns."

Suggestions for Effective Boundary Setting

- Focus on solutions – win/win.
- Seek understanding.
- Share what you can't do.
- Share what you can do.
- If you're unsure, say "Let give that some thought and get back to you tomorrow."
- Avoid explaining and apologizing.
- Be consistent with all parents.

Kind and Firm Boundaries Activity

Saying “no” with warmth and care strengthens trust and respect, it does not damage relationships.

1. Choose a role-play scenario from the next page.
2. Decide who will be the parent and who will be the teacher or school leader.
3. In the first role-play, the parent will make an unreasonable request. The teacher will respond by agreeing to the request.
4. In the second role-play, the parent makes the unreasonable request. The teacher will respond with a kind and firm boundary.
5. Switch roles and repeat with another scenario.
6. You will have 7 minutes to complete these role-plays. Remember, jump right into the activity with your partner and avoid talking about the tool or situation in the breakout room. We will discuss your experience after the role-plays!

Kind and Firm Boundaries Role-Play Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Extra Work

- Parent: "My child is advanced. Can you have my child do this workbook at school?"
- Teacher Kind/Firm Response:

"Joanna is so capable and I really appreciate your commitment. While I cannot support her with additional work that is not congruent with our curriculum. I can give her some additional focus on this area using our classroom materials and share strategies you can try at home."

Scenario 2 – Daily Updates

- Parent: "Could you send me daily updates about my child's behavior?"
- Teacher Kind/Firm Response:

"I understand you want to stay connected to your child's daily progress. Sending daily updates would be difficult without taking time away from the classroom. I can give you a call on Thursdays and share his progress, and, of course, notify you immediately if there are any major concerns."

Scenario 3 – Separating Children

- Parent: "Can you make sure my child doesn't play with Chen while he's at school?"
- Teacher: Kind/Firm Response:

"It sounds like you're worried about your child's interactions with Chen. That makes sense. They've had some challenges. While it's not possible for me to monitor their interactions all day, I would like to share with you how we are supporting them. They have been making some progress. Can I call you this tomorrow afternoon?"

Kind and Firm Boundaries Reflection

Parent	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
No Boundary			
Kind and Firm			

Teacher	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
No Boundary			
Kind and Firm			

Rescuing vs. Validating

When parents share a problem with us, we want to help. Beware! Rescuing or giving advice may hurt a relationship more than it helps.

1. Choose a partner.
2. Choose a role play scenario from the next page.
3. Decide who will play the parent, and who will play the teacher/leader in the first role play.
4. First role play: The parent shares their concern, and the teacher/leader responds with some well-meaning advice. The parent should respond to the teacher/leader authentically.
5. Second role play: Parent shares the concern, and the teacher/leader responds with one of the validation statements below.
6. Switch roles, and repeat steps 4-5
7. With your partner, complete the *Validating Feelings Processing Chart*, on the next page.

Validating Statements

I understand your discouragement...

It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed, and really wish...

I know how it feels to.... That can be really discouraging.

I can tell your worried about... I'm so glad you shared that with me.

Rescuing vs. Validating

Scenario 1 – Morning Transitions

The parent is having a difficult time with their child and morning transitions, and they are arriving to school late. They complain about the child's stubbornness and ask you for advice. The teacher gives the advice.

Scenario 2 – Problems with Spouse

The parent is having a difficult time with their spouse who is not following school/classroom procedures. The parent corners you and complains about their spouse. The teacher lets them know that they will talk to the other parent about the school/classroom procedures.

Scenario 3 – Problems with Another Family

The parent is worried about a social dynamic between their child and another child in the school (or in your class). They share with you some behavioral concerns about the other child during a get together outside of school. The parent complains to you about the child and the child's parents. They ask you for your advice. The teacher gives it.

Reflect

1. What did you learn from this experience in the role of the teacher?

2. What did you learn from this experience in the role of the parent?

Types of Parent Meetings

1. **Information Gathering** – An initial meeting to discuss an issue or concern. At this stage, parents and teachers are working together as a team to collect information and observations. This meeting is most often called by the parents, who have a concern, and followed by the *Problem-Solving Meeting*. When a teacher/leader asks for a meeting to discuss an issue or concern the meeting usually includes the *Problem-Solving* process.
2. **Problem-Solving Meeting** – At this meeting the parents and teacher/leader and parents collaborate to problem-solve. The teacher/leader is prepared with questions for parents, identified goals, and a plan to meet those goals and measure progress. While this meeting is collaborative, it is a teacher/leader led meeting with parent participation. *Follow-Up Meetings* are scheduled at this meeting.
3. **Follow-Up Meeting** – A phone call or short, planned meeting to review progress towards goals.
4. **Parent Conferences** – This is a big picture discussion. Conferences are intended to give overview of the student's progress only. In other words, discussing new issues at this meeting should be avoided. Proactive and responsive communication practices are the best way to accomplish this.
5. **Hallside Conferences** – This is not a good meeting. This is an issue-based meeting that takes place "on the fly". It is ripe for misunderstanding and communication breakdown. This short meeting can cause great harm that sometimes goes undetected and often cannot be undone. It should be avoided at all costs.

Session 4 Journal Reflection – Part I

1. Make a list of 5 unreasonable requests you have received from parents.
2. Imagine that you can go back in time and address the parent again. What would you say differently? Use the suggestions from this session to develop kind and firm boundary for each request.

Unreasonable Request	Kind and Firm Boundary

Session 4 Journal Reflection – Part II

1. Watch the video in Session 4 on the learning platform.
2. Consider four meetings that you had this year with parents. In one sentence, describe the topic of each meeting below.
3. On the previous page you will find a simple description of each type of parent meeting. Read through the descriptions and classify each of the meetings you had.
4. Why might it be important to identify what type of meeting you will be having with a parent before the meeting?

Reflective Listening

When a child (or adult) comes to you expressing strong feelings or simply complaining try responding like this:

***"You feel _____
because _____
and you wish _____."***

"Is there anything else?" or "Did I get that right?"

Keep responding in this manner, trying to interpret how they are feeling, until they are finished. This is a critical skill for children to learn when resolving conflict.

Reflection:

Recall a time when you really felt listened to. What did this person say or do that left you feeling heard and understood?

Reflective Listening Activity

1. Choose a partner.
2. Choose a role play scenario from below.
3. Decide who will play the teacher/leader, and who will play the parent in the first role play.
4. First role play: Parent approaches the teacher to complain or tattle, and the adult responds with "insight" or an explanation. The parent should respond to the teacher/leader authentically.
5. Second role play: Parent approaches the teacher to complain or tattle, and the teacher/leader responds with *Reflective Listening*. Don't try to solve the problem at this point. Simply let the parent know this issue is important, that you want to get some more information (observation), and schedule an appointment for a day or two out.
6. Switch roles, and repeat steps 4-5
7. With your partner, complete the *Reflective Listening* Processing Chart on the page after next.

Reflective Listening Role Play Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Bullying

The parent believes their child is being bullied at school. They are very upset. They sent their child to Montessori because they wanted a safe environment for her. The parent was bullied when he was a child.

Scenario 2 – Academic Progress

The parent is upset because they don't believe their child is succeeding academically. They share that they have friends with a child of the same age in a traditional school. That child is reading and received an award for spelling.

Scenario 3 – Unfair Treatment

The parent believes their child is being treated unfairly. The child reported to the parent that the teacher took the side of another child during a conflict. The parent wants answers.

Reflective Listening Processing Chart

Parent	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
Explaining			
Listening			

T/L	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
Explaining			
Listening			

Conversational Curiosity Questions

Too often we “stuff in” information and parents tune us out. When we draw forth, parents open up. Curiosity questions help to open up communication by asking questions with genuine curiosity and interest.

Here are some examples:

What happened? (LISTEN)

What is the most important thing about this to you? (LISTEN)

How are you feeling? (LISTEN)

How is this impacting your child/you? (LISTEN)

What are you most worried about? (LISTEN).

What would you like your child to learn from this experience? (LISTEN)

What strengths does your child have that will help him in this situation? (LISTEN)

What support do you wish for your child? (LISTEN)

What is the ideal outcome? (LISTEN)

Follow-Up Questions and Statements

Is there anything else?

Can you tell me more about that?

In response to “I don’t know,” go back to *Reflective Listening*.

Conversational Curiosity Questions Activity

1. Choose a partner.
2. Choose a role play scenario that you did not use from the *Reflective Listening Role Play Scenarios*.
3. Decide who will play the parent, and who will play the teacher/leader in the first role play.
4. First role play: The parent comes the teacher/leader with a concern, and the teacher/leader responds by sharing information. The child should respond to the parent authentically.
5. Second role play: The parent comes the teacher/leader with a concern, and the adult responds with *Reflective Listening* and then *Conversational Curiosity Questions*.
6. Switch roles, and repeat steps 4-5
7. With your partner, complete the *Conversational Curiosity Questions* Processing Chart, on the next page after next.

Conversational Curiosity Questions Processing Chart

Parent	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
Informing			
Questioning			

T-L	Thinking	Feeling	Deciding
Informing			
Questioning			

The Three Rs of Recovery from Mistakes

Errors divide men, but their correction is a means of union. ~ Maria Montessori

"What do you first do when you learn to swim? You make mistakes, do you not? And what happens? You make other mistakes, and when you have made all the mistakes you possibly can without drowning - and some of them many times over - what do you find? ~ Alfred Adler

1. **Recognize** the mistake with a feeling of responsibility without blame or excuses.

I didn't respond to your email last week.

I was dismissive of your concerns yesterday.

I made some assumptions in our conversation earlier.

I was defensive when we were talking yesterday when you shared your concerns.

2. **Reconcile** by validating hurt feelings.

You must have felt angry and ignored.

You probably felt unheard and invalidated.

If I were you, I would have felt as if I wasn't important.

I bet you felt hurt by my response.

3. **Resolve** the problem by working together on a solution.

I am sorry (name). You didn't deserve that.

Can we meet to see if we can figure this out together?

Would you forgive me?

What can I do to make this right?

The Three Rs of Recovery from Mistakes Activity

1. Recall a situation where you made a mistake in your interactions with a parent. Describe it briefly.
2. What were you thinking, feeling, and deciding (about yourself, the situation, or the child) when you made the mistake?
3. Write an amends statement using the format of *Three R's of Recover from Mistakes* on the previous page.
4. Choose a partner.
5. Decide who will be the parent and who will be the teacher/leader in the first role play.
6. First role play: The adult first shares their reflection from steps 1-5. Then makes amends to the parent. The parent responds authentically.
7. Second role play: Switch roles and repeat step 8.

Reflection:

How did you feel about the teacher/leader, as a parent, when they made amends with you?

How did you feel after making amends to the parent? What were you deciding?

The Problem-Solving Process

1. Share Your Observations.

- a. I'm observing that your child (name) is having difficulty with _____.
- b. It seems to be causing him _____ (frustration, difficulty with friends, etc.)
- c. I'm worried that it will impact _____.
- d. I would like to see her _____ (share a specific, measurable and realistic goal).

2. Invite Parents to Share Their Observations.

- a. Ask parents to share their feelings and observations.
- b. Use reflective listening.
- c. Ask follow-up questions.
- d. Ask parents to share their goals.

3. Share Your Plan.

- a. Here is what I am doing to support your child (name)_____.
- b. I have already seen the following progress _____.
- c. I am hoping and expecting that this will_____ (impact or result).

4. Ask for Parent Support

- a. Would you be willing to help by_____.
- b. I am hoping that this will_____ (impact or result).

5. Check-In for Understanding

- a. Review what you each will do, and what you hope to happen (RTI).
- b. How are you feeling? That makes sense.
- c. What can I do to help support you? (Listen)

6. Follow-Up

- a. Set a follow-up meeting now. "Let's get together in 3 weeks to see how your child (name) is progressing. I would like to call you next week to check in. What would be a good time?"
- b. Follow-up and review progress.

Mineral Rights Conversation

"Never be afraid of the conversations you are having. Be afraid of the conversations you are not having." ~ Susan Scott

Difficult conversations require courage and authenticity. In her book, *Fierce Conversations*, Susan Scott suggests that to be honest with others, we must first be honest with ourselves. (Scott, 2017). Being honest with ourselves has the incredible benefit of supplying courage when we need it the most.

1. Identify your most pressing issue.

The issue that I most need to resolve is:

2. Clarify the issue.

What's is concerning me?

How long has this been going on?

How bad are things?

3. Determine the current impact.

How is the issue currently impacting me?

How is the issue currently impacting the child?

How is the issue currently impacting others (classroom, parents, school)?

What results or effects are being produced by this situation?

When I consider the current impact on myself and others, what am I feeling (one word)?

4. Determine the future implications.

If nothing changes, what's likely to happen?

What's at stake for others relative to this issue?

What's at stake for me?

When I consider these possible outcomes, what am I feeling (one word)?

5. Examine your personal contribution to the issue.

What is my contribution to the problem?

What can I be doing better?

6. Describe the ideal outcome.

When this issue is resolved, what difference will that make?

When this issue is resolved, how will others be helped?

When this issue is resolved, what results will I enjoy?

When I imagine this resolution, I feel (one word)?

7. Commit to action.

What is the most potent step I could take to move this issue toward resolution?

What's might get in my way?

How will I get past it?

When will I take this step?

Reflection

What insights did you have while completing this reflection?

Note: This reflection is designed to give you perspective on the problem and to help motivate you to take the first steps in solving it by having a difficult conversation. It is not an outline for a conversation.

Reference

Scott, S. (2017). *Fierce Conversations (Revised and Updated): Achieving Success at Work and in Life One Conversation at a Time*. United States: Penguin Publishing Group.

Session 6 Journal Reflection

1. Take a moment and consider a parent conversation a parent conversation that is or was causing you stress; one that you want or wanted to avoid or did avoid. Describe it. What was the issue? Why were you stressed? What did you do?
2. On a separate sheet of paper, write out a *Mineral Rights Conversation* reflection. Answer each question in the *Mineral Rights* self-interview.
3. Describe your experience. How did the *Mineral Rights Conversation* self-interview affect you? What did you learn? Share your insights in the group chat.

Problem-Solving Process Note Taking Form

1. Share Your Observations

a. I'm observing that your child is having difficulty with:

b. It seems to be affecting them (frustration, discouragement, *Mistaken Goal*):

c. I'm worried that it will impact them:

d. I would like to see her (share a specific, measurable and realistic goal)

2. Invite Parents to Share Their Observations

- a. Ask parents to share their feelings and observations.
- b. Use reflective listening.
- c. Ask follow-up questions.
- d. Ask parents to share their goals.

3. Share Your Plan

a. Here is what I am doing to support your child

b. I have already seen the following progress

c. I am hoping and expecting that this will (impact or result)

4. Ask for Parent Support

a. Would you be willing to help by

b. I am hoping that this will (impact or result)

5. Check-In for Understanding

- a. Review what you each will do, and what you hope to happen (RTI).
- b. How are you feeling? That makes sense.
- c. What can I do to help support you? (Listen)

6. Follow-Up

- a. Set a follow-up meeting now. "Let's get together in 3 weeks to see how your child (name) is progressing. I would like to call you next week to check in. What would be a good time?"
- b. Follow-up and review progress.

Problem-Solving Meeting Activity

1. Enter the breakout room with your partner.
2. Choose which partner will lead the conversation with the social concern and which partner will lead conversation with the academic concern.
3. Use the *Problem-Solving Note Taking Form* to prepare for your conversation. Take 10 minutes for this process. You will use fictitious information for the notetaking.
4. When you finish your notes, decide who will be the parent and who will be the teacher in the first role-play.
5. In the first role-play, the teacher will lead the parent through the *Problem-Solving* meeting. The parent should respond naturally and ask questions as in a real meeting.
6. Switch roles and repeat the previous step.
7. Complete the reflection chart on the next page.

Reflection

1. How did preparing for the *Problem-Solving* meeting impact your interactions with the parent?
2. When you were in the role of the parent, what were you thinking, feeling and deciding about the teacher when the meeting ended?

Problem-Solving Role-Play Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Academic Concern

Teresa has been having difficulty remembering the steps for the math materials. She has been using the same material for the last two months and needs reminder lessons to restart the process. Her progress has been slow. She makes more progress with individual support. At the moment, you do not have a concern about a learning disability.

Scenario 2 – Social Concern

Michael has not been making social connections. During the morning work cycle he almost always works by himself. Outside he stands near adults and does not engage with the other children. You have tried to help him make connections, directly and indirectly. Use the Mistaken Goal Chart when you share your observations.

Example:

- a. I'm observing that your child is having difficulty with: *Robert seems to really want to connect with his classmates. He is very sensitive and when he asks a friend to work or play and they say no.*
- b. It seems to be affecting them (frustration, discouragement, *Mistaken Goal*): *He appears to feel very hurt and then hurts his friend. When I take time to validate his feelings first, he shows empathy for his friend, and wants to check on them.*
- c. I'm worried that it will impact them: *I am worried that his friendships will be impacted when he hurts others.*
- d. I would like to see her (share a specific, measurable and realistic goal):
My goal for him is to develop awareness of the best time to ask a friend to work or play and learn how to ask in a way that would invite a yes.

Mistaken Goal Chart

1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
If the parent/teacher feels:	And tends to react by:	And if, in response, the child:	The child's mistaken goal is:	The belief behind child's behavior is:	Coded messages	Proactive and empowering teacher responses include:
Annoyed Irritated Worried Guilty	Reminding Coaxing Doing things for the child they could do for themselves	Stops temporarily, but later resumes same or another disturbing behavior. Stops when given one-on-one attention.	Undue Attention (to keep others busy or get special service)	"I count (belong) only when I'm being noticed or getting special service." "I'm important only when I'm keeping you busy with me."	Notice Me. Involve Me Usefully.	Redirect by involving child in a useful task to gain useful attention. Say what you will do: "I care about you and ____." (Example: "I care about you and will spend time with you later.") Avoid special services. Say it only once and then act. Have faith in child to deal with feelings (don't fix or rescue). Plan special time. Involve child in creating routines. Touch without words. Set up nonverbal signals. Involve child in finding solutions during Class Meetings—and one to one.
Angry Challenged Threatened Defeated	Fighting Giving in Thinking "You can't get away with it" or "I'll make you" Wanting to be right	Intensifies behavior Displays defiant compliance Feels they've won when parent/teacher is upset Shows passive power	Misguided Power (to be boss)	"I belong only when I'm boss, in control, or proving no one can boss me." "You can't make me."	Let Me Help. Give Me Choices.	Acknowledge that you can't make them do something and redirect to positive power by asking for help. Offer a limited choice. Don't fight and don't give in. Withdraw from conflict and calm down. Be firm and kind. Act, don't talk. Decide what you will do. Let routines be the boss. Develop mutual respect. Get help from child to set reasonable and few limits. Practice follow-through. Involve child in finding solutions during Class Meetings—and one to one.
Hurt Disappointed Disbelieving Disgusted	Retaliating Getting even Thinking "How could you do this to me?" Taking behavior personally	Retaliates Hurts others Damages property Gets even Intensifies/escalates the same behavior or chooses another weapon	Revenge (to get even)	"I don't think I belong, so I'll hurt others as I feel hurt." "I can't be liked or loved."	I'm Hurting. Validate My Feelings.	Validate child's hurt feelings (you might have to guess what they are). Don't take behavior personally. Step out of revenge cycle by avoiding punishment and retaliation. Suggest Positive Time-Out for both of you, then focus on solutions. Use reflective listening. Share your feelings using "I" Language. Apologize and make amends. Encourage strengths. Put children In the Same Boat. Involve child in finding solutions during Class Meetings—and one to one.
Despairing Hopeless Helpless Inadequate	Giving up Doing for Over-helping Showing a lack of faith	Retreats further Becomes passive Shows no improvement Gives no response Avoids trying	Assumed Inadequacy (to give up and be left alone)	"I don't believe I can belong, so I'll convince others not to expect anything of me." "I am helpless and unable." "It's no use trying because I won't do it right."	Don't Give Up on Me. Show Me a Small Step.	Break tasks down to small steps. Make task easier until child experiences success. Set up opportunities for success. Take time for training. Teach skills/show how, but don't do for. Stop all criticism. Encourage any positive attempt, no matter how small. Show faith in child's abilities. Focus on assets. Don't pity. Don't give up. Enjoy the child. Build on the child's interests. Involve child in finding solutions during Class Meetings—and one to one.

Session 7 Journal Reflection

1. Consider a real problem-solving meeting that you may need to have. Use the *Problem-Solving Note Taking* form to prepare for a meeting with real parents from your classroom. You will find a copy of the *Problem-Solving Note Taking Form* in Session 7 on the learning platform.

Communication Considerations for Evaluation

Suggestions to Invite Collaboration and Cooperation

1. Use Communication Styles to develop communication plan.
2. Use the *Problem-Solving Process* to communicate your concerns and a clear plan.
3. Involve parents in the identification of challenges by giving them tasks to do at home.
4. Understand that a diagnosis is not a label. If a child needs a diagnosis and doesn't get one, that child will often label themselves.
5. Accept that a parent may decide to withdraw their child if they disagree with you. You may be a link in the chain in the process of evaluation.
6. Always use a professional to consult with the school.
7. Be kind and firm. This information may threaten the hopes and dreams of the parents. Is evaluation a suggestion or a request? Be clear with yourself and clear with the parents.
8. Be honest. After evaluation, consider if the school can meet the needs of the child. Most teacher/leaders have the skill to implement the suggestions in a specialized learning plan (IEP or other written plan). Does the school have the human resources to carry it out?

Traps that Defeat Collaboration and Cooperation

1. Making assumptions about a learning disability.
2. Comparing the child to other children who have been diagnosed with a learning disability.
3. Avoiding or delaying the difficult conversation out of fear of offending the parents.
4. Sharing your concerns too quickly without observation and data collection.
5. Not using of RTI (response to intervention).
6. Wanting parents to have the same priorities that you have.
7. Prioritizing student retention over student needs.
8. Lack of follow-up communication and progress monitoring.

The Problem-Solving Process for Evaluation Practice

1. Each partner should choose one of the situations on the next page for the problem-solving process practice.
2. Use the *Problem-Solving Note Taking Form* to prepare for your parent meeting.
3. Decide who will play the parent, and who will play the teacher/leader during the first role-play.
4. The first teacher/leader leads the parent through the problem-solving process. When you share your concerns, be sure to focus on what you've done and what the results have been (RTI – response to intervention).
5. Switch roles and repeat step 3.

Reflection

1. In the role of the parent, what were you feeling? What were you deciding (about the situation, yourself, the teacher/leader, your child)?
2. In the role of the teacher/leader what were you feeling? What were you deciding (about the situation, yourself, the parent, the child)?
3. What insights did you have?

Problem-Solving Process for Evaluation Role-Play Scenarios

Scenario 1 – Spelling Concerns

Rajiv is an upper elementary student who is a very strong reader. His reading fluency scores have been in the ninety-ninth percentile. His written work has shown significant spelling mistakes, which seem incongruent with his reading ability. You have Rajiv take a spelling benchmark test. His scores are in the fourth percentile. You start giving Rajiv daily direct instruction using a spelling program that was recommended by an educational psychologist. Rajiv showing progress, but not what you would expect of a typically developing upper elementary student. You have determined that Rajiv's mother has an *analytical* communication style, and his father has an *amiable* communication style. The mother makes most of the educational decisions.

Scenario 2 – Reading Concerns

Pauline is a primary student, age 4. Both of her parents were diagnosed with dyslexia when they were in elementary school. Pauline is only able to identify four letter sounds when the sandpaper letters are presented to her. She has been working with the sandpaper letters for a full year. She is having the same difficulty with quantity and symbol identification. You have been working with her daily using the sandpaper letters and numbers and counters. She is making little progress, and sometimes does not remember a sound or quantity that she seemed to know the day before. You have started using flash-card material recommended by the schools learning specialist. She is making slow progress, as her retention is improving. She will be 5 in two months. You have determined that Pauline's father has an *expressive* communication style, and her mother has a *driver* communication style. The mother and father seem to weigh in equally on educational decisions. They are worried that their daughter will have some of the same challenges they had.

Scenario 3 – Attention Concerns

Zach is a lower elementary student. He loves coming to school, and he is very attentive in lessons, and shows enthusiasm in working with the materials. It is evident through conversation that he is retaining what he learns in lessons and through use of the materials. His work does not demonstrate the same understanding. He rarely completes his work. It is common for him to have two or three materials out, located in different parts of the classroom. His written work is often recorded in multiple places within his composition book. He frequently misplaces his

work and personal items. You are concerned that he may have attention or executive functioning challenges. His parents have been very supportive of you and the school. Zach's parents enrolled him in the school because they felt that public school was not a "good fit" for him. Both of Zach's parents appear to have an *expressive* communication style.

Parent Conferences

Parent Stressors	What Parents Want

Parent Conferences Process

1. Greetings
2. Review of Goals
3. Developmental Progress – Review general growth and developmental progress towards goals set at the beginning of the year.
 - a. Personal development – academic and cognitive progress, executive functioning skills. Share progress and challenges.
 - b. Social development – character development, relationship skills, and contributions to the community. Share progress and challenges.
 - c. Support– what specifically is being done to support challenges and previous progress.
4. Work Progress
 - a. Curriculum– Review progress and mastery of specific lessons, materials, skills.
 - b. Examples of student work.
5. Schedule needed follow-up communication, if needed.

Parent Conferences Suggestions

All Levels

1. Hold issue-based meetings before parent conferences.
2. A few weeks before conferences send an email sharing the purpose of parent conferences – an overview of progress. Ask parents to set up a time to discuss concerns before conferences so you can review progress during the conference.
3. Have your calendar ready during parent conferences. If a parent does bring up an issue, listen reflectively, and let them know you want to give the issue your full attention. Set a meeting then and there.
4. Be candid about areas for growth and strengths. All children have both. A sure way to erode trust is overly focus on positive information. Parents want to know that you know their child, and they know their child is not perfect.
5. When you discuss an area for growth, include how you are supporting this growth. Be specific.
6. Know your parents' communication style. Meet them where they are!
7. Avoid language that connotes judgement or assigns an adult motive like, *I think, he needs, she wanted to, they always, she avoids, he seeks, they decided, etc.*
8. Use observational language like, *appears, shows, exhibits, demonstrates, etc.*
9. Never make assumptions about what happens at home.
10. Set needed follow-up communication on the spot.

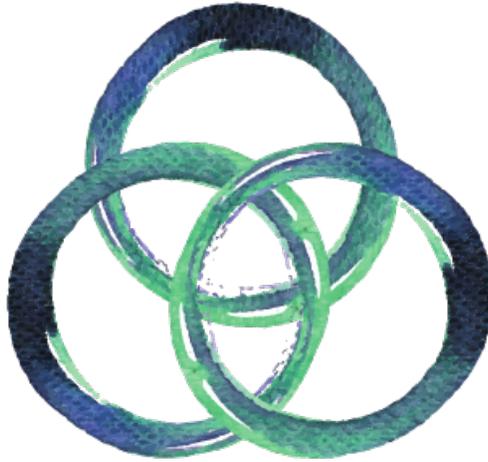
Children's House

1. Focus on development. Give developmental context and reassurance for developmentally appropriate behavior.
2. Show progressive work over the year, and over three years (e.g. self-portrait, handwriting, self-made books).
3. Have materials available to demonstrate what their child is working on.
4. Share a video during the conference of the child working. Explain the purpose of the material.
5. Parents will ask what their child can do at home. Have a specific answer.

Elementary and Adolescence

1. Involve elementary and adolescent students in the conference.
2. If you use student portfolios, work with students to make sure work is edited. The purpose of portfolios is to present the student's best work. Preparing a presentation is a life skill.
3. Conference with students before you write conference reports and work together to complete their self-evaluation together. Use the SMART goal process.
4. Take time to practice presenting their self-evaluation.
5. During the conference, both the teacher and the student share their evaluations to the parents.
6. Divide the conference into two parts. One for parents, student and teacher, and one for just parents and the teacher.
7. Avoid sharing newsletter information in parent conferences. The conference is about the child's progress not the classroom's progress.

Contact



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POSITIVE DISCIPLINE
FOR MONTESSORI SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES

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For more information on *Positive Discipline in the Montessori Classroom* and upcoming events, please visit: www.pdmc-montessori.org

For resources, including the *Student Support Plan*, visit: www.pdmc-montessori/resources.org
The password for this page is: *PDMC2021*

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