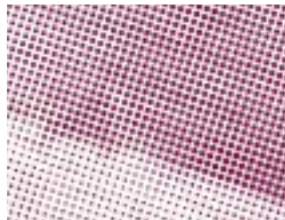


Making the difference

Parents' evenings



Parents' evenings are important because they give you an opportunity to discuss what your child is doing at school and how they are getting on. You can also cover any issues you may want to talk about with your child's teacher, or each subject teacher in secondary school. So, going to parents' evenings can help you to become better involved in your child's learning. It helps you to give your child good, practical support and to make choices. When schools and parents work together, children do better.

What makes the difference at parents' evenings?

Parents' evenings give you an opportunity to ask questions and share information about your child and their learning. You can strengthen your partnership with your child's teacher. This helps the teacher to help your child.

Sometimes parents can find it difficult to attend parents' evenings for a number of reasons. They may feel that they don't have sufficient time with their child's teacher. Many schools recognise this and are working with parents to improve the arrangements for parents' evenings so that everyone gets the best out of them.

To help you go along to the parents' evenings, schools may:

- ▶ provide a crèche where younger children can be looked after
- ▶ welcome a friend or relative along with you, or put you in touch with a translator
- ▶ set up appointments so you can book a suitable time to meet with the teacher
- ▶ arrange a special time to meet if you have difficulty attending on the day
- ▶ invite your child to come with you so everyone can be involved in the discussion
- ▶ make sure you can also talk with other staff who know your child
- ▶ have examples of your child's work for you to look at whilst you are waiting.

If any of these ideas could help you, get in touch with the school.

How can you get the most out of parents' evenings?

You may receive your child's school report just before a parents' evening. It's a good idea to read the report, talk to your child about it and make a list of questions you would like to ask your child's teacher. The report will usually contain some advice from the teacher on what your child will do next – the Next Steps section. This can be a good starting point for discussing your child's progress and achievements. If there is anything in the report that you don't understand, ask your child's teacher about it at the parents' evening.



Some questions you might want to ask.

- ▶ Is my child happy at school?
- ▶ How well does my child take part in class activities?
- ▶ What more can you tell me about my child's strengths and how they can improve?
- ▶ Can you explain what my child will be doing next?
- ▶ What can I do to help my child at home?

Talking about these things helps parents and teachers to understand and agree the roles that they can play.

Children do better when information about their learning is shared between everyone involved in their education. Discussing what your child is doing outside school can help the teacher to build on that learning at school.

You might want to share information on:

- ▶ the interests, hobbies or activities your child is involved in
- ▶ how you feel your child is coping with school and school work
- ▶ any particular worries or difficulties you've noticed
- ▶ changes in family circumstances.

Letting your child's teacher know what is going on outside of school can be helpful but you don't have to give any more information than you want to.

So, by going to parents' evenings you can make a real difference to your child's learning. Parents' evenings help you to play an active role in discussing your child's progress. The school will value your views and you can pick up practical suggestions about how you can help at home.

What parents say about parents' evenings...

"It's an opportunity to see what the teachers are like."

"We expect to find out how our child's doing and how we can help."

"It's the main chance to see what's really going on."

What teachers say...

"It helps you to see your pupils in context – what they are like out of school."

"You get to learn things about your pupils that are helpful in the classroom."

"Parents and teachers working together ... bring out the best in children."

Parents' evenings step-by-step

Read over your child's school report and discuss it with them.

Make a note of any questions you want to ask.

At the parents' evening, ask the teacher questions and share information about your child. Pick up some practical advice for you to support your child.

Discuss the teacher's comments with your child, talk about what you will each do and when and how you will do it.

If you want to discuss an issue or concern in more detail, arrange a follow-up meeting with your child's teacher or school.

You can find more information about parents' evenings, or any aspect of Scottish education, on Parentzone. www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

Useful links and contacts

Parentzone – www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk

BBC Parents – www.bbc.co.uk/schools/parents

Parents Online – www.parentsonline.gov.uk

ParentLine Scotland

Tel: 0808 800 2222 www.parentlinescotland.org.uk

One Parent Families Scotland

13 Gayfield Square, Edinburgh EH1 3NX

Tel: 0800 018 5026 www.opfs.org.uk

Parent Network Scotland

Tel: 0131 555 6780 www.parentnetworkscotland.org.uk

Enquire (The Scottish advice service for additional support for learning)

Helpline: 0845 123 23 03 Textphone: 0131 222 2439

www.enquire.org.uk

This leaflet is the third in a series. It highlights the real difference parents can and do make to their children's learning. Together with local advice you will have on the practical arrangements in your child's school, this series will offer information to help you become better involved in your child's education. Other published leaflets are on Homework and Sharing Information. The series also includes materials for schools and teachers on these topics.

If you would like to contact us, or suggest topics for future leaflets, please visit **www.parentzonescotland.gov.uk**. This leaflet will be available in community languages and alternative formats from your child's school and the Parentzone website.

This series is prepared in partnership with the Quality in Education Centre (University of Strathclyde) and Children in Scotland.



SCOTTISH EXECUTIVE