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The Parent Teacher Conference - Now What?

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You just had your 15 minute conference with your child's teacher. How did it go? You may be ecstatic, but if you are still reading, it may have left you flat or if may have left you alarmed. Remember, it was 15 minutes. If the news was not what you expected, chances are your teacher was uneasy, too.

If you have received a troubling report, you may feel that you have to "mull over that information" for the next several weeks, as Teacher's Convention, Thanksgiving and holiday breaks and their attendant activities fly by. Here are a few suggestions that can help you manage difficult conferences to achieve the best result for your child this school year.

- Don't sit back and wait for the next conference to see if things improve.
- Do ask the teacher how you can best work together to address the issues of concern.

- Try to arrange a follow up plan to interface in the immediate future, preferably before Thanksgiving, and certainly before the holiday break.
- Do try to enhance lines of communication with the teacher with a weekly phone call, email or communication book to ensure that there will be less surprises going forward.
- If you have withheld information that may be helpful, consider sharing that information.
- Do look at your home routines to see if you can streamline sleep, food and reduce stressful times at home.
- Don't "blame" the teacher or the other kids, but find out what the teacher is doing to try to ameliorate the identified problems concerning your child.
- Do discuss the teacher's concerns with any members of your child's team in and out of school. They may have suggestions of ways to help your child manage parts of the day that are of concern.
- Contact your therapist at Pediatric Potentials and see if she can help you suggest strategies to address the areas of concern in school, or to target therapy to boost your child's Fall transition to the new expectations.
- Encourage team efforts to support you and your family.

With permission from the teacher and parent, we can arrange a school observation. Often when a child is experiencing sensory and organizational difficulties in school, these face-to-face meetings help the teacher better understand your child's needs and implement strategies in the classroom. You and your therapist can discuss additional ways to interface with the child's team. If the problems feel overwhelming, please let us help!!!