



“Alone we can do so little. Together we can do so much.”

—Helen Keller

Preparing for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Dear PS5 Special Parents,

I don't know about you, but “Back to School” isn't just a one-day thing—it's a process. Countless phone calls, emails and texts with teachers, case managers, therapists, doctors and other parents, mostly to commiserate. But hopefully by now you've all settled into the school year and your kids are feeling more comfortable in their classrooms. Now that everyone is hitting their stride, it's time to assess how things are going and work together

to find solutions for any persistent issues your children may be having. Now's a great time to build a one-on-one relationship and to show your appreciation for all the hard work our teachers dedicate to our children.

This month's SEPAC meeting was jam-packed with excellent tips for successful Parent-Teacher Conferences as well as the usual great resources for special needs parents.

The main themes of the meeting

were openness, compromise and respectfulness.

What happens if we enter Parent-Teacher Conferences with 1) an open mind toward hearing the teacher's perspective, 2) the willingness to work together with your teacher and your child to find solutions to issues and 3) respect towards teachers' time and resources?

We can truly forge powerful and lasting relationships to help our children fulfill their potential, no matter their disabilities.

IMPORTANT CONTACTS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS PARENTS @ PS5

SEPAC 2016-2017 Representatives:

Emily Pecot — emily@emilypecot.com

Majidd Fauzia -- fauziamajidd@gmail.com

Principal, John Rivero -- jrivero@jcboe.org

School Psychologist, Dr. Julio Rosario -- jrosario@jcboe.org

School Social Worker, David Velez -- dvelez1@jcboe.org

JCBOE Special Education Department:

www.jcboe.org click on “Departments” then “Special Education”

JCBOE Special Education Parent Hotline [201-915-6300](tel:201-915-6300)

Special Needs
TEACHERS



Tips for Successful Parent-Teacher Conferences

- Schedule a specific time to meet with your child's teacher, and be on time.
- Review your child's work, grades and goals to formulate specific questions.
- Write down your questions!
- Be sure to ask about all aspects of your child's school life—academics, interaction with peers, behavior and extracurricular activities.
- Speak with your child before and after the meeting about their concerns and their perspectives.
- Be kind and calm with your child's teacher. And complimenting the classroom décor is always gets on their good side!
- Be open with your child's teacher about your home life. New siblings, financial difficulties, divorce, health problems and any other stressors can have a major impact on a child's school life.
- Ask the most important questions first, and be mindful of meetings that are scheduled after yours.
- Have a two-way conversation—talk AND listen to your child's teacher.
- Think about ways you would like to be involved (and are able to be involved) in your child's learning.
- Ask your child's teacher for the best way to contact them—email, text message or hand-written notes?
- Make a list of positive and negative experiences your child is having at school and share them with teacher.
- If your child is struggling academically, ask specifically what your child's current level of ability is and ask what exactly the teacher feels is causing the problems.
- Ask if there are additional supports available within the school. Is there a reading specialist or other support staff?
- If your child is having difficulties with other children, ask if your child has any friends and what the teacher thinks might be causing the difficulties.
- Ask your child's teacher if they think it would be a good idea for your child to work with the school guidance counselor.
- If you need more time to speak with your child's teacher, ask when would be a good time for them and try to be flexible.
- Don't forget to thank your child's teacher!

SEPAC MEETING HIGHLIGHTS NOVEMBER 2016

Is Your Child Having Academic Difficulties?

Sometimes our special kids need some extra help and practice at home to keep their learning on track.

www.teacherspayteachers.com is an excellent and deep resource for finding practice lessons for your child to work on at home. There is a wide variety of free and low cost materials, organized by subject and grade level. Highly recommend!

www.skoolbo.com offers highly visual exercises that build on repetition and has a child-friendly usability. It's a bit like an educational video game on steroids! And it's available for various computers and devices.

Is Your Child Having Behavioral Problems at Home?

www.hudsoncmo.org is a care management organization "dedicated to organizing and coordinating services, resources and support for children in Hudson County with multiple and complex emotional and behavioral needs." They can provide in-home support for struggling families.

<http://www.familypartnershc.org/> is another organization offering support for families coping with behavioral difficulties.

Special Olympics After School Athletics

Just a reminder, there are spots still available for the current session for USSO and YAP athletic programs and sign ups have begun for the Spring session.

Special Olympics Unified Sports Program – Offering two different after school programs on Wednesday afternoons, one for ages 3-7 and one for ages 8-21. The little ones will engage in general athletic activities while the big kids have options for team-based programs including bowling, track and field, basketball, softball and swimming.

For more information contact Ms. Dina Kosc, Program Coordinator at [201-915-6031](tel:201-915-6031).

Go to <http://bit.do/usso-packet> for the 3-7 year olds application packet.

Go to <http://bit.do/yap-packet> for the 8-21 year olds application packet.

Register Ready – New Jersey Special Needs Registry for Disasters

As we head into Winter, please be sure to have a plan in case of power outages and other difficulties related to severe storms.

You can register yourself or your family for this free program offered by the New Jersey Office of Emergency Management. The program is designed to offer assistance to special needs adults and families who may have difficulty getting to safety in the event of an emergency.

Registration via their website is easy! Go to <http://bit.do/ready-register>

Are you looking for something specific? Perhaps a PS5 Special Needs Parents Night Out? Or maybe a monthly support group? We are open to ideas (and volunteers!) for ways to better serve PS5's special needs community.

*"Every student can learn, just not on the same day or in the same way."
- George Evans*