

Sentence starters for teachers to respond to families' concerns

When families come to you with concerns about their child, how can you be supportive and productive? Try responding with these sentence starters.

Acknowledge their expertise

“Thank you for trusting me enough to talk about this.”

“You know your child best, so I value your ideas.”

“Sharing this concern with me shows how much you care.”

Gather and share information

“Let’s start by talking about some of your child’s strengths.”

“Tell me what you’ve noticed that brought up this concern.”

“Let’s see if we observe any patterns between home and school.”

Clarify information

“Can you tell me more about your concern?”

“I don’t know the answer to that, but I will find out for you.”

“Do you have questions about anything I’ve said?”

Talk about next steps and give reassurance

“Do you have thoughts about what you’d like to happen next?”

“Is it OK with you if I share this conversation with _____?”

“We can work together to make a plan we’re all comfortable with.”