FREE FAMILY GUIDE | GRADES K-3

Reading Conference Question Guide



Conferences are short, often just 10-15 minutes. Choose your top 3-4 questions below and star them. You and the teacher are partners, and these questions help you build a plan together for your child's reading.

Before you go: bring

- [ ] Your child's latest report card and any reading scores you have received
- [ ] A few work samples or phone photos of homework
- [ ] Notes on what you notice at home: specific examples, like "guesses at words" or "avoids reading aloud"
- [ ] Your top 3-4 questions, starred, and a pen for notes

1 What is my child doing well in reading?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

Specific strengths with examples: "She knows all her letter sounds and loves finding rhyming words." General comments like "She's sweet" or "He tries hard" are kind, but ask what skills you can build on.

My notes:

2 Which reading skills are strengths, and which need work: letter sounds, sounding out words, fluency (smooth, accurate reading), or understanding?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

A skill-by-skill picture: "He knows his consonant sounds, but blending sounds into words is still tricky." Ask to see a work sample so you can see what the teacher sees.

My notes:

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3 What reading screening or assessment data do you have, and how does it compare to grade-level expectations?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

Actual scores or benchmarks explained in plain language, plus what the assessment measures. Feel free to ask: "Can I have a copy?" and "What does this number mean?"

My notes:

4 What extra help is my child getting? How often, for how long, with whom, and what is being taught?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

A clear schedule: "Three 20-minute small-group sessions a week with the reading specialist, working on vowel sounds." "We're keeping an eye on it" is not yet a plan.

My notes:

5 How are you tracking my child's progress, and when will I hear about it?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

A set schedule for checking progress (for example, every few weeks) and a date for the next update. You should know what "improvement" will look like.

My notes:

6 What can we do at home that matches what you're teaching?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

One or two short, specific activities (10-15 minutes) tied to what the class is learning, like practicing the sounds being taught or reading short decodable texts. "Just read more" is a start, but ask for more detail.

My notes:

7 If we don't see growth by a certain date, what is the next step?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

A timeline and real options: changing the type or amount of support, more assessment, or an evaluation. Pick a date together, such as "Let's meet again in January and look at the data."

My notes:

8 I'm worried about dyslexia or another learning difference. How do I request an evaluation?

A GOOD ANSWER SOUNDS LIKE

A clear explanation of who to send the request to, that it should be in writing, what the timeline is, and what happens next. Some schools use different terms, and a private evaluation is another route, so ask about both.

My notes:

Phrases you might hear, and how to follow up

"Let's wait and see."	**Try:** What data are we waiting on? What will we do if we don't see growth by [date]?
"She'll catch up."	**Try:** What are you seeing that tells you that? Can we set a check-in date to look at her progress together?
"He's doing fine."	**Try:** What is "fine" based on? Can I see his scores and a work sample?
"We can't say if it's dyslexia."	**Try:** I understand. What evaluation can the school do, and how do I request it in writing?

THREE SENTENCES THAT WORK ANYWHERE

"Can you show me?" "What is the plan?" "When will we check again?" These three questions work in any conference, about any subject. Say them kindly and write down the answers.

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After the conference: our plan

Write down what was agreed upon before you leave.Then, send a short email afterward to confirm it. That keeps everyone on the same page.

What will happen	Who is responsible	By when

Sample email: requesting an evaluation in writing

Date: _____

To: [Principal / special education coordinator/ teacher]

Re: Request for an evaluation for [child's full name], [grade, teacher]

Dear [name],

I am writing to request an evaluation to find out whether my child needs special education services. I am concerned about [child's] progress in reading. At home I have noticed [specific examples, like difficulty sounding out words or avoiding reading]. Please tell me what the next steps are and the timeline, and send me a copy of the parent rights notice. You can reach me at [phone / email].

Thank you,
[Your name]

Good to know: Rules, timelines, and terms vary by state and district, so check your district's special education page or ask the school for its process. This guide is general information for families. It is not legal or medical advice and cannot diagnose a reading difficulty. Only a qualified evaluation can do that.