

Words for Hard Conversations with Parents

Talking with parents about developmental or behavioral concerns can be challenging. It is important to communicate your concerns clearly and directly, but also in a way that is respectful and kind, and keeps the focus on how teachers and parents can work together to best understand and support the child. Here are some ideas for language to use during such conversations.

“I’d like to talk with you about how things are going with ____.”

“Here are some things I really appreciate about ____.”

“I’ve noticed some really nice strengths in ____.”

“____ is making progress in ____.”

“I’ve observed/noticed that ____.”

“____ is having a hard time with ____.”

“I wanted us to talk about this so that we can work together to help ____ learn to ____.”

“How does this sound to you? What are your thoughts about this?”

“How does this fit with what you see at home from ____.”

“Here’s how we have been handling this behavior so far.”

“Here are some things we are doing at school to help ____.”

“Here are some things we are going to try ____.”

“Are there strategies that you use at home that work well for ____?”

“Help me understand ____.”

“So at home ____.”

“So your concern is ____.”

“Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know?”

“How does this plan sound to you?”

“Do you have other suggestions you’d like to share?”

“Here are some ideas that might be helpful with this issue at home.”

“Here are some resources I’d like to share with you.”

“Here is our school’s policy about _____. Here’s why we have that rule.”

“What is the best way for us to keep in touch about how things are going with this issue over the next few weeks?”

“Thank you for being willing to talk with me about this.”

“I appreciate your help.”

“Let’s continue to work together on ____.”

From the course *Grow with Me: Understanding and Using Developmental Assessments*. Part of the *CIRCLE Infant & Toddler Teacher Training Play with Me Series*. Available on cliengage.org.