

ESL Fall (9-10-09)

Back to School Vocabulary list: describe these items

textbook vs. workbook
spiral notebook
3 ring binder
red grading pencil
crayons
scissors
folders with brads
pocket folder
pencil bag
highlighter (yellow or orange)
set of dividers
3 hole notebook paper
locker mirror
glue sticks
pocket dictionary
box of kleenex

PARENTS, BACK-TO-SCHOOL NIGHT IS NOT ALL ABOUT YOUR CHILD

Summary from an article in Austin American-Statesman (9-1-09)

Parents worry that their child is not being challenged, that their child won't get enough to eat during lunch, that their child will be *roughed up* on the playground. Some parents want to *buttonhole* their children's teachers at Back To School Night to discuss these issues. But teachers say this evening is reserved for learning about the curriculum, classroom schedules, homework policies, field trips and year long goals. Teachers don't want to have discussions about individual students on Back To School Night. They want parents to ask general questions about the course or school which would be helpful to the other parents.

Introduce yourself to the teacher and remind them of your child's name. It is still early in the year and some teachers may not know all their students well yet. If you feel the need to give the teacher a brief *tip* on dealing with your child, do it by handing her a note that she can read later. If you have concerns about your child, call or email the teacher to make an appointment during her off period or after school.

Answer questions from the article:

1. What are some of the things parents worry about?
2. What does the teacher want to discuss at Back To School Night?
3. What does "buttonhole the teacher" mean?
4. What should you say when you introduce yourself to the teacher?
5. What should you do if you want to pass on a tip about your child?
6. When is a good time to talk to the teacher about your child?
7. Give an example of a "tip" you might want to pass on to your child's teacher.

Discussion Questions:

1. Describe your first day of school.
2. Describe how you felt as a parent on your child's first day of school.
3. Were you ever "roughed up" at school?
4. Describe a favorite teacher.
5. What would you change about today's schools?
6. Compare American schools to schools in your country.
7. Are there any school issues you'd like to talk about?

Practice this parent and teacher conversation, then answer the questions at the bottom.

Mrs. Chen: Hello Mrs. Flores, I'm Julie Chen, Jane's mother. How is Jane doing in your class?

Mrs. Flores: It's nice to meet you Mrs. Chen. Overall, Jane is doing well.

Mrs. Chen: Does Jane get along with the other children.

Mrs. Flores: Generally, yes. She seems outgoing.

Mrs. Chen: Does she participate in class?

Mrs. Flores: To be honest, she doesn't raise her hand often. I think she may be a little shy about speaking out in class. Perhaps, she doesn't always understand what I'm saying. She needs to raise her hand and tell me if she doesn't understand the question.

Mrs. Chen: I'll talk to her about that. I'll tell her to ask you to repeat the question if she doesn't understand. How is Jane doing in math? That is her hardest subject.

Mrs. Flores: She is doing well with fractions, but she's having a little trouble with decimals. If you could check over her homework every night, I think it would help a lot.

Mrs. Chen: Are you satisfied with her progress in spelling?

Mrs. Flores: Jane is doing much better than at the start of school.

Mrs. Chen: Does Jane ever get in trouble at school.

Mrs. Flores: Oh no. She is very polite to everyone.

Mrs. Chen: Jane has complained about a little boy who teases her. Do you know anything about this?

Mrs. Flores: As a matter of fact, I had to caution Adam last week for making faces at Jane. I don't think he meant any harm, but I told him to stop. Adam is the class clown, and he frequently acts up a little bit. I'll talk to him and make sure he isn't being mean.

Mrs. Chen: Thank you. I would appreciate that. Jane really enjoys your class. Please feel free to call me at home if you have any problems with Jane.

Mrs. Flores: I'll do that. It was nice to meet you.

Discussion:

- 1) Did your parents help you with your homework?
- 2) Do you help your kids with their homework?
- 3) How many hours of homework did you have?
- 4) Do you think kids do too much homework?
- 5) Should parents limit television on school nights?
- 6) How can parents help their children do well in school?
- 7) Have you ever had a teacher conference? Did you have any problems communicating?
- 8) What questions do you have about what happens in American schools?
- 9) How are schools different now than when you attended?
- 10) Does your school have a website?
- 11) Can you reach your child's teacher by email?
- 12) Do you have any questions about the forms you are required to fill out?