

CogAT Parent Resource™

How to conference with your child's teacher

Your child's teacher is your partner in their education, and together you share the same goal: **your child's success**. A parent-teacher conference is a valuable opportunity for each of you to share your unique perspectives and collaborate on learning goals for your child. *The Cognitive Abilities Test™ (CogAT®)* provides information that parents and teachers can use to better understand how a child learns and select targeted methods to support them in the classroom. This document provides suggestions for use of the *Ability Profile™* to inform your preparation for a parent-teacher conference.

Ahead of the conference

In order to prepare for a conference, it is beneficial to reflect on your child's learning and gather the questions you have for your child's teacher.

- Look over your child's test scores and academic grades, including quizzes and homework grades.
- Review your child's *Ability Profile* from the *CogAT*.
- Compare the *Ability Profile* to your child's academic achievement and note similarities and differences.
- Talk to your child about their feelings about school and any topics they may want you to discuss with their teacher.
- Write out the questions you want to ask the teacher during the conference.

The following sections offer suggestions of questions for your child's teacher grouped by their potential benefit for different *Ability Profiles*. However, you know your child best – therefore you are encouraged to review all of the sections to find inspiration for questions that would be most beneficial for your child's situation.



For students with an **A** profile

If your child has an A profile, their scores are relatively the same across all three batteries of the CogAT. Many of the questions below can apply to any student regardless of *Ability Profile*, while others only apply to specific needs.

Here are some suggested teacher questions for students with an **A** profile:

- What structures and resources are in place in the classroom to help my child learn?
- Does my child get to work in groups with students of different abilities?
- Is there anything you are doing at school that I should be sure to reinforce at home with my child?
- Do you recommend any additional testing, tutoring or support for my child that we have not already discussed?
- What study skills would it be most beneficial for my child to work on?
- Does my child have a particular subject of interest in school that you have observed?
- Do you feel that my child is well-prepared to enter the next grade level? Are there any specific areas they need to focus on as they advance in their learning?
- Can you suggest any tools or resources I can use at home to support my child in school?
- Do you notice any areas of special interest or talent where my child might enjoy enrichment outside of school?
- How does my child do socially at school? How well do they work with others?
- How are my child's organizational skills? Are there any areas they can improve upon?
- Are there any school activities or resources I should know about that would benefit my child?

For students with a **B**, **C** or **E** profile

Students with a B, C or E profile show areas of relative strength and/or relative weakness in their verbal, nonverbal or quantitative reasoning. If your child has areas of relative strength and weakness, it may be beneficial to ask the teacher how they are supporting your child's areas of weakness in the classroom and leveraging their areas of strength.

Here are some examples of ways teachers can stretch strengths and support weaknesses for different profiles in the classroom:



Profile	Stretch or support example
Q-	Have students use drawings, manipulatives and/or words to explain their reasoning in math problems.
V-	Modify classroom activities where the student is expected to do more than one verbal task, such as watching a video and taking notes.
N-	Provide access to drawings and physical models to help the learner form mental models of concepts and problems.
Q+	Assign collaborative projects that support the learner's math interests and build verbal reasoning.
V+	Have the student restate mathematical expressions and explain concepts to others.
N+	Encourage the student to use models and manipulatives to learn new concepts.

The following questions can be used when conferencing with your child's teacher:

- Are there any tasks you see my child showing preference to or avoiding at school?
- What instructional strategies do you use to build upon my child's strengths?
- Are there any enrichment activities you would recommend for their area of strength?
- Do you see my child's relative weakness impacting their academic achievement?
- What adaptations are being made to support my child in their area of relative weakness?



For students with a gap between **ability** and **achievement**

If you observe a gap between your child's ability data and their achievement at school, their teacher should be able to provide valuable insight from a classroom perspective. Consider asking your child's teacher these questions if their standardized test scores are **lower** than their CogAT scores would suggest:

- Do you think my child is reaching their potential?
- Is my child participating in class discussions and activities?
- How do you perceive my child's work habits?
- What can I do at home to help support my child's academic progress?
- Are there extra supports that can be put in place at school to help my child bridge the gap between their abilities and achievement?

If a student's achievement is **higher** than their CogAT scores would suggest, you may want to ask:

- What strategies do you see my child using to achieve academically?
- How do you perceive my child's emotional well-being in the classroom?
- Do you have any concerns or suggestions as my child prepares to move on to the next grade level?

After the conference

After the conference, talk with your child and share the positive points of their conference as well as any areas where problems were noted. If their teacher has asked you to work on something at home, such as a study skill, math facts, or homework completion, come up with a plan together to address that area of improvement.

It is also helpful to follow up with the teacher to thank them for the conference and restate any plans or goals that were created during your time together. You may want to plan a time to check in on student progress or schedule another meeting if you and the teacher determined that other professionals, such as an administrator, counselor, or resource teacher, should be involved in discussions about your child.

We hope you find the [Ability Profile](#) a useful tool when conferencing with your child's teacher and other professionals in their school.

We hope you find these strategies and resources helpful in supporting your learner at home.



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Additional resources

[Harvard Family Research Project: Parent-Teacher Conferences- A Tip Sheet for Parents](#)

[Tips for Parent Teacher Conferences \(English Language Learners\)](#)