

THE BREAKTHROUGH CONVERSATION GUIDE

You already know that your child is bright. He may be a gifted artist, musician, or athlete who is just having a hard time doing well in school right now. You're frustrated and need to find a simple way to get to the bottom of the issues, but you don't even know where to begin. Having a conversation to find out why is a good place to start. It lets your child know that you understand the struggles he is going through right now and you want to help. That's why I created *The Breakthrough Conversation Guide*.

Now is the time to have a **meaningful conversation** with your child about how he feels about learning, what's happening in class, and how he would like to feel in any learning environment.

The goal is to discover more from your child's point of view (you may be surprised what you'll find out).

Let's get started.

Here are some ideas to help you get the conversation started.

To get the best results, when you ask your child a question, allow him enough time to answer it (please, please, please don't interrupt your child while he is talking).

I highly suggest *writing down or even voice recording your child's responses* so that you can review it later as you work on finding a solution.

Parent Prompt:

Start the conversation by telling your child a story about a time when you felt as an adult you learned new things and that made you feel smart. You can recall how smart you felt and the confidence you had when you contributed to conversations with family and friends. Your child wants to feel smart and have that same confidence in class and among his peers.

When you ask your child the questions below, let your child answer and you just

LISTEN AND RESPOND with any one of these answers (the goal is to let your child do most of the talking and allow him time to express himself):

- “I see”
- “Really, tell me a little more about that”
- “I never knew that”
- “That’s interesting to hear”
- “I learned a lot from you, thanks”
- “Sure, we can figure out a way to solve this problem”

Having such a meaningful conversation with your child would give you an idea of the kind of help to seek for him.

Say:

“I noticed you’ve been having some challenges with school and I want us to talk about what’s going on and how we can help you overcome them. You’re not in any trouble. I just want to understand what you need to raise your grades. So I’m going to ask you some questions”.

Questions to ask your child if the struggle is related to:

Literacy and Critical Thinking Skills (reading, spelling & comprehension)

- I see that you don’t like to read. Are the words challenging for you?
- Do you guess at a lot of words or you try to figure it out, if you don’t really know it?
- Is it easy for you to understand what you read?
- Is it easy for you to answer questions about what you’ve read; like the main idea and thinking about what may happen next in the story?
- I know you have to read and write a lot in school. What’s hardest about that for you? When is it fun or easy? How can I help to make this easier for you?

Focusing in class, classwork, or a specific subject

- What makes it hard for you to finish your work in class?

- Tell me about what goes on in class.

- How do the other students in your class act (at the start, in the middle of the lesson or at the end? Are you distracted by other students?

- How do you feel about your schoolwork and homework? Is it too easy or challenging?

- Which part of (subject) is easy and which part is challenging for you?

- Does the teacher like explaining things, when other students who are having trouble ask questions? Do you ask the teacher questions when you don't understand what she is teaching?

- If someone is really stuck, does your teacher ever suggest a different way of figuring out the solution?

- Does she show the same method with different examples - or does she do something else? Did you ask your teacher to explain the steps again?

- Do you feel safe to ask your teacher to explain it again if she has done it a few times?

- Is it easy for you to see what's on the board / projector clearly?

- What kind of help do you think you need to help you learn and get better grades?

Grades

- Did you complete and turn in all your homework and projects?
- I see you had a low / failing grade on (subject). Why is (subject) difficult for you?
- How did you study for the quiz or test? Did you use your notes, study guide, or the textbook?
- Did you understand the questions? Did you feel like you'd seen the questions on the test before, or were they a surprise?
- Did you answer all the questions on the quiz /test?
- What do you feel you have to do differently in this class to earn a better grade?
- How can I help you do better on your upcoming quizzes and tests?

You can finish the conversation with:

“I would like to get you a tutor to help you learn how to study, so you can earn better grades on your quizzes and tests. What do you think? I'm sure that would make a big difference.”

How do you feel about (finally) having this kind of conversation with your child? I hope you're relieved! And what information did you gather to help you help your child to overcome his/her challenges?

It's very important that you take action right away so that both you and your child can begin to experience less stress and more success with schoolwork.

I'd like to know how your conversation with your child panned out. Email me at info@sparkthinking.net to share your experience and / or results with me. I can't wait to hear from you.



I'm Sylvia Adjeso and for the past 18+ years I've been helping students learn to read + spell, comprehend and think critically, focus, do math, and study with ease so they can make better grades.

As an interventionist, I love using creative approaches to help students reach their full academic potential.

I love reading about cutting-edge educational research and teaching strategies, and cooking! You can reach me at 770-716-0224 or info@sparkthinking.net.