

Nine Steps to great conferences in Literacy Studio!

1. Take the child's temperature; how are they feeling, what do you notice about nonverbal signals and behaviors? Give some thought to how you'll accommodate the child's current social and emotional dispositions toward reading and writing.
2. Check on progress from the class goal and prior individual intentions—take careful notes. If age appropriate, invite the child to take notes on the conference as well. Listen to the child's perspective on their progress toward goals and intentions—take careful notes. Conferences should focus on what the child has to say rather than on what we have to teach.
3. I often confer using the book I read aloud that day (or earlier) if the text the child is reading or what they are writing isn't conducive to the concept I'm teaching or their goal.
4. Remind them about the learning targets the class is learning and inquire about how they are working toward the class goal or if their current reading and writing doesn't permit authentic application of the class goal; make a note about when, and in what context, they might try it.
5. Ask them to read aloud only if your focus is on understanding their word learning or take a running record.
6. Be explicit about how the strategy or tool discussed in a conference can be generalized beyond the current context; make the link between reading and writing explicit. Help the child understand the relevance of their goals to progress as a reader and to thinking about the world outside the classroom. The conversation revolves around authentic issues, topics, and skills readers and writers will use going forward. Don't be afraid to teach in a conference!
7. Point out what the child is doing that is new for them as a reader or writer. Ask the child to point out what they are trying and what they would like to try next; what's their intention?
8. Invite students to share new insights during Reflecting Sessions if appropriate.
9. Leave each conference with a clear direction; invite the child to describe the goal or intention in their own words to ensure that both of you have a record of the goal.