



ANNUAL EDUCATION CHECKUP

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Most parents are convinced of the importance of an annual medical checkup for their children, but what about an annual education checkup? ParentSmart suggests that a good way to help assure a child's progress in school is to conduct an Annual Education Checkup. This checklist tells you how.

Basic steps include reviewing home and school files kept on your child, interviewing your child's teacher and possibly other members of the school staff. If your child is having special problems in school you may need to consult some of the schools system's specialists.

After talking to your child's teacher or counselor and reviewing and correcting the school record, if any aspect of your child's schooling remains unsatisfactory to you, there are some steps you can take toward resolving the situation. You can appeal to the principal, the superintendent or the school board if you disagree with disciplinary action or school policies and practices. Keep in mind that when you request a hearing it is your right to bring you own expert, a doctor, a lawyer, interpreter or parent advocate.

Working together with the school is the best way to help your child in school. It is out hope that this review will help discover school problems early and give parent s and teachers a chance to work out a plan for each child to guarantee school success.

The following pages each present a category and a checklist.

AT HOME

Check on school related materials sent home during the past year. It's a good idea to keep a separate file on each child. As you review the file, ask your child for his or her comments on school. You might ask, "what do you like best and least?" and "What would you like to change?"

The checklist below lists other questions to consider.

| At Home Checklist – Questions to Consider | Yes | No | Need More Info. |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Do I have all previously issued report cards? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does any correspondence with teachers and principals remain unanswered? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If our school produces a handbook, do I have a copy? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does it clearly answer any questions I may have about school policies on subjects such as suspension, promotion, graduation procedures, attendance and due process? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If our school does not have a handbook, do I know to whom to go for answers to questions? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Are my child's immunizations against contagious diseases up to date? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have I made an appointment for my child's annual school medical checkup for the fall? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have I made a list of questions I want to ask my child's teacher, and have I set aside materials from my home file that I plan to take with me? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCE

Many schools schedule regular parent-teacher conferences during the fall months. If your school does not do this, you should make an appointment to meet with your child’s teacher in October or November. It is most helpful if both parents can be available to attend the conference.

You preparation for the Parent Teacher Conference should include a review of the materials you file at home and the child’s school records. Make a list of questions or topics you wish to raise during the conference and be sure to cover those listed below.

| Parent-Teacher Conference Checklist – Areas to Cover | Yes | No | Need More Info. |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Is my child performing at grade level in basic skills? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| At level? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Below level? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Above level? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Math? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Reading? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has my child taken achievement, intelligence or aptitude tests in the past year? Which ones and what do the scores mean? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does my child have strengths and weaknesses in major subject areas? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Can we go over some examples of my child’s class work together? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does my child need special help in any academic subject? In social adjustment? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Would you recommend referral to other school specialists? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has my child regularly completed the homework you assigned? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Has my child attended class regularly? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Does my child get along well with classmates? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you observed any changes in learning progress during the year? Has learning improved or declined dramatically? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have you noticed any changes in behavior such as squinting, extreme fatigue, or irritability, which may be signals of medical problems? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

PARENTS: If your child has been identified as learning disabled or has physical or emotional issues Public Law 94-142 requires that you be involved in the annual development and review of and Individualized Education Program for your child. Ask about your school's plans for compliance with this federal law.

ParentSmart makes available a Special Education Checkup Card, which lists parents' rights in the education of handicapped children and provides a similar chart format for parents to use. Please contact us at www.parentsmart.com to request this helpful tool.

CONFERENCE FOLLOW-UP

If there are issues or problem areas which arise during the fall conference, it would be wise to schedule an end-of-the-year conference to review your child's progress. At this meeting you might ask if the teacher has suggestions for summer activities such as summer school, remedial help, or home learning activities. The child's class, grade, and teacher assignments for next year may also be discussed at this time.

ANNUAL REVIEW OF SCHOOL RECORDS

You have the right to review all of your child's school records and challenge any entry you believe to be inaccurate or unfair. This right is guaranteed by federal law (the Family and Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974). Local schools are required to provide you with a list of all of the records kept on your child and to inform you of the procedures for reviewing and challenging them. If you are not familiar with your school's policies, ask.

Many school systems require that you make your request in writing to the school principal. The school must respond to your written or verbal request within 45 days, although many school systems have shorter time limits. Use the checklist on the following page when you review your child's school records.

Most of you will find that your questions have been answered and that the records are in good order. If you have found any part of your child's record to be an invasion of family privacy, inaccurate, misleading, irrelevant, outdated, or otherwise harmful to your child, you should submit your objection in writing to the school principal asking that it be removed or revised. If your request is refused, you may request a hearing with an impartial hearing officer. If you lose this appeal, you have the right to enter your own statement as part of the permanent record.

Have I received satisfactory answers to questions about the location and contents of my child's school records:

| Annual Review of School Records Checklist | Yes | No | Need More Info. |
|--|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Has my child's entire school record been gathered in the school office? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| If not, where are the other parts of the records? Are parts of the record on tape, in a computer data bank, or on microfilm or microfiche? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| In looking through the record, are there any unexplained labels used to describe my child like "hyperactive", "learning disabled", or "anti-social?" | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Have I seen the following parts of the record and had them explained to me? (Do not expect to see all of the following. Some entries may not apply to your child.) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Grades by year | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Attendance Records | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Health Records | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Test Scores | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Psychologists and school social workers reports to school staff or recommendations? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Reports from welfare and social service agencies | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Transcripts from other schools | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Guidance counselor's career or college recommendations | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Disciplinary actions | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • Honors and Awards | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
