



Non Confrontational questioning

Asking questions in meetings about our children can be difficult, especially if we are nervous, angry or upset. Some meetings may be an emotional experience. Thinking about how to phrase questions ahead of time, can make a difference, keep the meeting positive and set the stage for a “working together” relationship.

Positive opening questions are:

- Tell me how well my child is doing in your class...
- What is my child good at?
- What are my child’s positive points...?
- What do you /others like about my child?

Questions that show a willingness to work together...

- How can **we** help my child with improving on _____ **together**?
- How can **we** _____?
- What are your thoughts on _____?
- It has been suggested that _____ can be helpful
- Can we try _____?
- How can I support you in supporting my child?
- I have found _____ particularly helpful and I wanted to share this in case it’s helpful for you too. (you know your child best, feel free to share that knowledge)
- My child thinks _____ may help, would it be worth a try? (your child’s view is very important, if they can vocalise what might help this is very useful)

Questions when you are seeking clarification or are unsure about what has been said....

- What do you mean when you say _____?
- How does _____ relate to my child?
- I am not sure what you mean, please could you put that another way for me?
- Let me see if I understand you; do you mean _____ or _____?



- I am not sure how _____ relates to our problem/discussion/issue please can you explain that to me?
- Could you give me an example of what you mean / how that would look/ how that will work?
- Would _____ be a good example of that?

If things aren't moving in the direction you wanted you could try:

- Have you considered _____ (you can give an idea)
- My understanding is _____ (especially helpful if you are certain of a fact and want to put this forward in a way that won't create ill feeling)
- I have heard that _____ can be helpful, could we try that?
- If you can't do _____, what could you do instead?

Planning for your meeting...

It is helpful to plan ahead for any meeting. You could:

- Note down the topics that you want to cover so you don't leave without the information that you require.
- Take a note book and pen so that you can refer to what you wanted to ask and write down anything that will be done as an outcome or an action and who is going to carry that out and when
- Consider summarising the actions at the end of the meeting
- Take your partner / friend / family member with you for moral support. They may also be able to help you to keep track of your questions and possibly help you to write down anything that is said in response to your questions.

IASS will be able to help you prepare of a meeting and to reflect on the meeting afterwards. Some one from IASS may be able to attend the meeting in an impartial capacity with you should you wish.