

Goal-Setting Conference Challenges

Barrier	Possible Solutions
My parents won't come to school for a meeting.	<p>Don't conduct the meeting at school. Try conducting the meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over the phone • At a community hub—fast food restaurant, coffee shop, church • Visit them at home
Yeah, I tried that. They still won't come.	<p>Build your relationship and extend personal invitations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask students to write personal invitations to their parents. • Call to follow up on written invitations. • If they have siblings, team up with them to see if you can conduct your student and siblings' meetings back-to-back. • Enlist other families or the community to introduce you to the family member.
My parents are not literate. They don't understand all this data.	<p>If you conduct these meetings face-to-face, there is little reading/ writing required.</p> <p>If not, differentiate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use simple visual aids—bar graphs, book samples, manipulatives, etc. • Ask parents to support learning in creative ways—asking comprehension questions after a TV show, cooking with a kid to learn measurements, finding rhyming words in songs, etc.
My parents and I won't have the same goals for the student. Their goals may be too easy or unrealistic. Or they might have nothing to do with academics.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remember that you both have the student's best interests at heart. You have more in common than you think. • Start with two goals—one academic and one behavioral. If the student masters the behavioral goal earlier than the end of the year, then you can focus entirely on the academic goal. • Share the data—a parent may not know what the state average is for 4th graders, etc. So share that information with them. Break up the goal into chunks. This way if they want to start with a goal that you feel is "too easy" you can readjust once the child exceeds it or is ahead of schedule on progress. If their goal is "unrealistic," then celebrate with the parent as the child reaches the short term benchmarks and who knows, maybe if you and the parent set the bar high, the student will achieve well beyond what you imagined!