

Tips & Techniques for Successful Interviewing

- Establish rapport and trust by creating a respectful and professional atmosphere
- Begin with introductions to set a positive tone
- Ensure anonymity of participants
- Explain the purpose of the visit and the format of the interview
- Make eye contact; be attentive and express interest
- Call participants by name (name tags are useful)
- Ask meaningful questions
 - Question, listen, probe
 - Reflect, summarize, restate, evaluate
 - Ask for examples and specifics
 - Rephrase/clarify questions if participant appears unclear
 - Sequence questions in meaningful order
- Take turns asking questions
- Give participants time to think
- Be cautious when using educational terminology (research-based, best practices, curriculum, assessments, etc.) with student and parent groups; explain the meaning
- Remain neutral; don't show strong reactions
- Provide transitions between topics
- Assign a note taker
- Get all participants involved
- Look for themes and patterns (consensus validity)
- Reserve a general question to close
- Respect the allotted time for interviewing
- Thank participants for their time and willingness to share