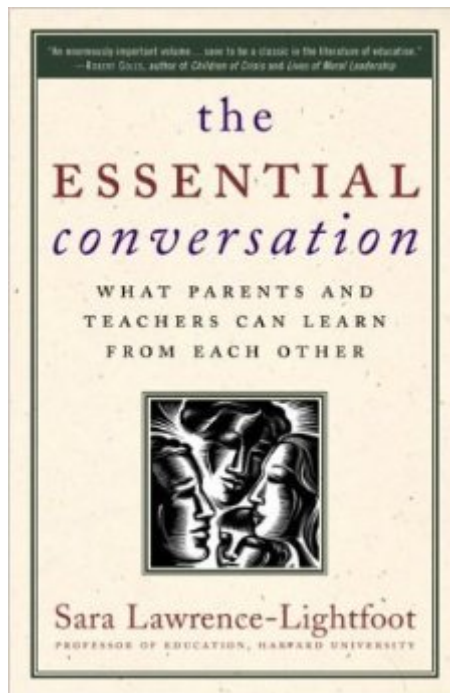


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# The Essential Conversation: What Parents And Teachers Can Learn From Each Other



## Synopsis

With the insights she has gleaned from her close and subtle observation of parent-teacher conferences, renowned Harvard University professor Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot has written a wise, useful book about the ways in which parents and teachers can make the most of their essential conversation—the dialogue between the most vital people in a child's life. The essential conversation is the crucial exchange that occurs between parents and teachers—a dialogue that takes place more than one hundred million times a year across our country and is both mirror of and metaphor for the larger cultural forces that define family-school relationships and shape the development of our children. Participating in this twice-yearly ritual, so friendly and benign in its apparent goals, parents and teachers are often wracked with anxiety. In a meeting marked by decorum and politeness, they frequently exhibit wariness and assume defensive postures. Even though the conversation appears to be focused on the student, adults may find themselves playing out their own childhood histories, insecurities, and fears. Through vivid portraits and parables, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot captures the dynamics of this complex, intense relationship from the perspective of both parents and teachers. She also identifies new principles and practices for improving family-school relationships. In a voice that combines the passion of a mother, the skepticism of a social scientist, and the keen understanding of one of our nation's most admired educators, Lawrence-Lightfoot offers penetrating analysis and an urgent call to arms for all those who want to act in the best interests of their children. For parents and teachers who seek productive dialogues and collaborative alliances in support of the learning and growth of their children, this book will offer valuable insights, incisive lessons, and deft guidance on how to communicate more effectively. In *The Essential Conversation*, Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot brings scholarship, warmth, and wisdom to an immensely important cultural subject—the way we raise our children. From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## **Customer Reviews**

I bought this because every teacher needs some help working alongside parents. I have yet to have a class (undergraduate/graduate) where we have been taught how to collaborate with parents. This is not a list of what to and what to not do with parents. Instead, this book shares many personal accounts of both teachers and parents. As I work toward my doctoral degree, I will remember this book as a text in my teacher-training classes.

As an educator, I have recommended this book to everyone. It is so important to consider what each of us brings into a conversation about; our children and their education; parent/teacher relationships; and conducting classrooms where everyone is included!

This book promotes the idea that teachers and parents should be in a relationship based on the well being of the child. Leaving open the idea that it is up to each individual teacher to create the most effective way for the communication to develop. Great suggestions and some basic core principles about how to establish healthy connections with parents.

Really only about elementary school relationships between parents and teachers. Well written but repetitive.

This is certainly a "must-read" for both parents and teachers alike, in order to align their performance desires and expectations. This book paves the way for dialogue that is needed between parents and teachers.

Interesting read for teachers. Full of anecdotes, and wisdom from an experienced teacher.

Typical excellence by Prof. Lightfoot!

Excellent content!

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