

Why, Mommy?

January 2015 Newsletter



Curiosity is the desire to question and learn. And kids are born curious. From day one, they seem driven to figure out how the world around them works.

Do kids need a push to be curious?

As most parents know, kids have an instinct to ask questions. They seem to have endless energy in that department! Their natural curiosity makes them eager to explore all the time. Adults in children's lives can encourage this natural urge to "know." When adults support the quest to discover, they can help shape habits to make their kids lifelong learners. They can help boost their children's performance in school and beyond.

How can parents, caregivers and other adults help?

Here are some practical tips:

- **Be a role model.** When you spend time with your children, wonder about things. If you take a walk, wonder out loud about the trees, flowers and sky. For example: "I wonder how we can tell how old this tree is?" "I wonder how far up the sky goes?" Questions like these let your child see that you're interested in the world around you.
- **Follow their lead.** Notice what interests your kids. If they really like music, play it in the house and car. If they love flowers, buy them a few gardening tools. Spend some time digging and planting together. Find some books on plants and read them together.

- **Answer their questions according to their level of understanding.** Before you answer a question your kids pose, ask what they think the answer might be. This can be a good way to understand how much your children will grasp. Once you hear their thoughts, you can add or modify to give an answer that's on their level.
- **If you don't know the answers, don't fake it.** You might feel like you have to have all the answers. When you get stumped, it's a chance to learn with your child. You can say, "That's a great question. Let's find out together." Then go to the library together to hunt for answers. Or sit down and search on the computer together. Again, you're modeling something important: the desire and resourcefulness to learn when you don't know.
- **Give your kids a chance to use their curiosity.** Many kids are enrolled in extra activities like dancing, karate, singing or art. But do your kids have "free" time? Never underestimate how important this can be.

Children don't need to be programmed every minute. Free time gives them the chance to ponder, create and explore. If you doubt this, consider how much fun kids can have with a cardboard container. Their curiosity and imagination can turn an empty washing machine box into a tent in the woods, a pirate ship on the high seas and who knows what else!

Walt Disney once said, "Curiosity keeps leading us down new paths."¹ Encourage and enjoy your children's curiosity and learn through life together.

¹www.brainyquotes.com