

Tips for Parents: Encouraging Questioning

Excerpts taken from the book
7 Keys to Comprehension: How to Help Your Kids Read It and Get It!
By Susan Zimmerman (for Parents and Teachers)

- Questions help a reader clarify ideas and deepen understanding.
- If you ask questions as you read, you are awake, you are thinking.
- Diving in with questions—even those that are unanswerable—enriches the reading experience.
- In their quest to make sense of their world, they bombard those around them—young children are master questioners. Why are there clouds? Do fish sleep? Why is the sky blue? Frequently, parents have no idea how to answer these endless questions. In desperation they might change the subject or come up with a feeble dodge to get off the hook. In fact, those questions show a child's brilliance. As a parent, you want to encourage them to ask the real questions, those questions that really puzzle them, even if you can't answer them.
- Wonder keeps the imagination alive and curiosity well-tuned.
- Asking questions is how you make sense of the world.
- Questions lead you to new ideas, new perspectives, and additional questions.
- Some questions don't have easy answers. But all questions inspire thinking, generate discussion, or lead you to other sources.
- Share *your* questions with your child, showing him/her that even *you* have questions when you read.
- Encourage your child to ask questions as he read is part of a larger task: inspiring wonder. There are so many things to wonder about: I wonder what a black hole is. I wonder why people risk their lives to climb Mt. Everest. I wonder how life began...Before you start reading a book with your child, play the "I Wonder" game.
- Questions send readers on quests. They cause readers to seek, pursue and search for answers or deeper understanding.
- Help your child fall in love with the story—share the excitement. Questions keep you turning the pages to find out what happens next.
- There's no doubt about it: Kids love to generate their own questions! Questioning makes reading fun. But to know how to question, your child needs to hear *your* questions first. This is not about asking your child questions. Instead, it's about modeling what it means to be curious by sharing the questions *you* have while you read. Don't rush the answers right away. Pose several questions and then let your child take a turn asking questions that come to his/her mind. You're showing your child how to be an active player in the world of reading.

Parent/Child Home Activities

- Have children keep track of all the questions they ask over the weekend.
- Students should interview parents to find out how they use questions at work.
- Have a parent and child come up with a burning question. For instance, "Why are there so many different kinds of snakes in Florida?" From the questions generated, take a trip to the library to check out some books about snakes.

Books That Raise Questions

Picture Books

The Sick Day, Patricia MacLachlan

Elmer, David McKee

Charlie Anderson, Barbara Abercrombie

The Bracelet, Yoshiko Uchida

Uncle Jed's Barbershop, Margaree King Mitchell

The Wolf, Margaret Barbalet

