

Ask the right kinds of questions to improve your child's thinking

Experts recommend asking questions to build your child's thinking skills. But how do you know what the right questions are?

A well-known classification system, Bloom's Taxonomy, divides thinking skills into six categories. Ask your child questions that fall under these categories:

1. Knowledge. Find out what your child knows about a topic. Talk about facts. Start with the basics, such as who, what, when and where. "When did the war start?" "Who was the President?" The answers should be clearly right or wrong.
2. Comprehension. Test how well your child understands the subject. Ask him to describe, explain or predict something. "If we were tadpoles, where would we live?"
3. Application. Encourage your child to connect previous learning to new experiences. "Chickens hatch from eggs. Do you think ostriches hatch from eggs, too?"
4. Analysis. Discuss how something works or how it's organized. "Name the different kinds of animals you studied."
5. Synthesis. This involves thinking about old information in new ways. "What if Christopher Columbus lived today? Where could he explore?"
6. Evaluation. Help your child be creative without worrying about right or wrong. "Imagine you could go back in time. What would you do during the Civil War?" "How might you change history?"

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