

Having Thoughtful Conversations

When we make time to talk with our children, how do we make those talks rewarding? Rather than having children simply list the things they do, people they spend time with, or things they would like, invite children to think about the quality of these ideas. Here are a few everyday opportunities to help you have thoughtful conversations with a child.

Daily Events

Instead of: What did you do today?

Ask: What was the most important or exciting thing you did today?

This helps children think about everything they did and choose only one thing that has the quality of being important or exciting. It also tells you much more about the child when you know how they value spending their time.

Learning

Instead of: What did you learn today?

Ask: What are the most helpful and least helpful things they learned?

This helps children think about all the things they've learned, and connect learning to what they value. It also helps you to know if the child has understood what they've learned and more importantly, how important this learning is.

Friends

Instead of: Who did you spend time with today?

Ask: What makes a good friend? Which of your friends are your best friends?

This helps children think about what characteristics make a person a quality friend. It tells you about the kind of people a child is spending time with. It also teaches children what to think about before deciding to spend time with someone and how to build healthy relationships.

Chores

Instead of: Telling a child what chores they must complete.

Ask: Which family member would be the best person to do each chore?

This invites the child to pause and think about the characteristics of each person, the nature of each chore, and which person best fits each chore. It also teaches them how important it is that everyone in the family help out.

Family Gatherings

Instead of: Telling children there will be a family gathering and what people will do there.

Ask: What can we do together so that everyone is included?

This helps children think about how important it is to make sure everyone feels welcome. It also helps children think about the meaning of family.

Heroes

Instead of: What's your favourite cartoon figure or character in a story?

Ask: What makes someone a hero and which imaginary character is a hero? For example, are they strong, honest, kind and caring, funny?

This invites children to pause and think about what qualities make a great human being and tells you about the qualities the child thinks are important.