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Why Are Frogs Green? How to Handle Your Child's Nonstop Questions

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Why is the sky blue? Where did the dinosaurs go? Why can't I stay up late? How do planes stay up in the sky? Where do babies come from? Why do children ask so many questions??? The reasons are almost as diverse as the questions...



- **Genuine curiosity** – Some children are curious about the world and just want to know how things work so they ask questions to find out. (Example: "How many hairs do you have on your head?")



- **Seek attention** – Some children want the attention of adults and asking questions is one method they use to get it.



- **Practice communication skills** – Asking questions allows children to participate in the back and forth turn-taking that occurs naturally in communication when asking and answering questions.



- **Express anxiety** – Some children will ask repeatedly about something when they are worried or uneasy about it. (Example: "What happens when you die?")



- **Validate facts** – Sometimes children ask questions to confirm things they already know. (Example: A child asks "What's that?" after you've already told him/her what "that" is.)



- **Get you to change your mind** – Sometimes children ask questions because they don't like a previous answer you've given them and they want you to shift from a "no" answer to a "yes" one. (Example: "Why can't I stay up late tonight?")



So What Should a Parent Do?

So, how is a parent supposed to handle the nonstop questions a child asks? Here are a few tips and suggestions...



- **Don't ignore them** – No matter what your child's reasons are for asking questions, don't ignore them. All of a child's questions can be used as teachable moments.



- **Be patient** – When you're patient with your child's nonstop questions, you are showing your child that you value his/her thoughts and ideas. It also helps you keep the lines of communication open so your child knows that he/she can come to you for any reason and you will be there for him/her.



- **Try to figure out why your child is asking the question** – Knowing why a child is asking a question can help you determine the best way to answer the question. (Example: Is your child asking because he/she is curious, or is he/she trying to get you to change your mind about something?)



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- **Provide answers** – Once you know why your child is asking a question, answer it. Use resources that are available to you (e.g., the internet, your child’s teacher, other parents, etc.) to answer important questions that you may not have answers to. Be sure to provide answers that are appropriate for your child’s age.



- **Ask your child to answer** – If you feel like your child is asking questions to verify what he/she already knows is true or to get you to change your mind, ask your child to answer his/her own question. (Example: “Why do YOU think you can’t stay up late tonight?”) Asking your child to answer his/her own question teaches your child to think, problem-solve/reason, and come up with his/her own explanation. This may be difficult for your child, so you may have to walk him/her through steps to help develop these skills. (Example: “We’ve talked about this before. What is happening tomorrow? What might happen if you stay up late tonight? Why is it important to be alert tomorrow? etc...)



- **Admit it when you can’t answer a question** – It’s okay to let your child know that sometimes you don’t know the answer to his/her question.

Questions are an important part of the learning process. And while nonstop questions can be exhausting, if you follow these suggestions, you can help your child develop skills (such as creativity, critical thinking, and communication) that will benefit him/her throughout his/her lifetime.

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