

# 15 Questions to Replace 'How Was School Today?'

[Elena Aguilar](#) October 27, 2016

## Parent Partnership

These questions will help you draw out important information from your kids.



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How many times have you asked your child, "How was school today?" and been frustrated by the lack of response? As a parent, I'm guilty of asking my son this question all the time, even though I usually don't get much

in return.

Sometimes (to be honest), I haven't had the energy for a real conversation. Other times, I just can't think of what to ask. As a teacher, I have often wished that kids would share stories of the awesome things we were doing with their parents, but I couldn't figure out how to make that happen.

Now that my son is in middle school—where communication from teachers is less than it was when he was in elementary school and more stuff is happening at school that I need to be aware of—I've identified a list of questions that draw out important information. I wish that when I was in the classroom I'd been able to offer this list to parents so that they could hear about what we were doing in our class.

## **The Questions**

With slight wording modifications, these questions can work with children of all ages:

1. Tell me about a moment today when you felt excited about what you were learning.
2. Tell me about a moment in class when you felt confused.
3. Think about what you learned and did in school today.  
What's something you'd like to know more about?  
What's a question you have that came from your

learning today?

4. Were there any moments today when you felt worried?  
When you felt scared?
5. Were there any times today when you felt disrespected  
by anyone? Tell me about those moments.
6. Were there times today when you felt that one of your  
classmates demonstrated care for you?
7. Were there any moments today when you felt proud of  
yourself?
8. Tell me about a conversation you had with a classmate  
or friend that you enjoyed.
9. What was challenging about your day?
10. What do you appreciate about your day?
11. What did you learn about yourself today?
12. Is there anything that you'd like to talk about that I  
might be able to help you figure out?
13. Is there anything you're worried about?
14. What are you looking forward to tomorrow?
15. Is there a question you wish I'd ask you about your day?

## **Tips for Asking Questions**

*How* and *when* we ask these questions makes a big difference in the information we receive from our kids. First, you don't want to ask all of these questions on the same day. You might ask one or two. After a while, you'll figure out which ones elicit the most meaningful responses. You'll

want to ask during a time when you have the ability to focus so that your child feels they have your full attention. With my child—and in my household—dinner and driving in the car are optimal times for these conversations.

Now these conversations have become routine. My son knows that when we drive to school I'll ask him what he's looking forward to, if there's anything he's worried about, and if there's anything he wants to talk about with me that I might be able to help him figure out.

## More Suggestions

The following can help your conversations be positive and powerful:

- **Don't interrupt.** This is a good rule for any conversation, but especially if you want to get a lot of information out of a kid.
- **Ask for more.** Simply say, "I'd love to hear more about that..." Or, "Can you expand on that a little?"
- **Ask about feelings.** After a child describes an experience, ask, "How did you feel in that moment? What did you notice about your feelings?"
- **Validate feelings.** Whatever your kid feels is normal and okay. Let them know that. Feelings are okay. Tell them this.
- **Tell them it's not okay for teachers or kids to be**

**unkind or mean.** If they tell you a story about a teacher who yelled or disrespected them (regardless of what they said or did) let them know that it's not okay for an adult to treat them that way. Same goes for how they are treated by other children.

- **Thank them for sharing with you.** Always appreciate their honesty and willingness to share the highlights and bright spots, as well as the difficult moments. This will fuel their confidence in telling you more.

What questions bring about the most conversation between you and your kids?

## **Parent Partnership**

# **How Parents Can Help Their Kids With Studying**

Advice that teachers can share with the parents of middle and high school students about how to get the most out of time spent studying.

October 31, 2019

Dear parents,

I'd like to give you some pointers for assisting your child with studying. As a parent of three children, I get it—

this can be tough, especially when you don't know the content well yourself. I have some advice on how to help, no matter how much—or how little—you understand about a subject.

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