

Open Ended Questions to Ask Children

Can you tell me what happened?

Can you think of a new way to do it?

Can you help me think this through?

Do you have any other ideas?

How are they alike, different?

How could we make it work?

How could we work together to solve this?

How did that happen?

How did you feel when you finished it?

How did you get that to work?

How did you know that?

How did you work it out?

How do you explain it?

How might you do it differently?

Tell me about how you worked together.

Tell me about it.

Tell me about the character (books).

Tell me about what you built, created

What can you do with this toy?

Can you try it another way?

Can you do it faster?

Can you make it move (go)?

Can you hold one? Two? Three?

Tell me about what you saw.

What can we do to get it to work?

What do you think will happen next?

What did you see happening?

What do you like best about it?

What do you notice about ____?

What do you think caused it to change?

What do you think would happen if you...?

What do you think will happen next?

What happened at the beginning, middle or end of the story (books)?

What did you learn?

What makes it work?

What did you notice happening?

What problems did you have?

What was easy?

What was hard for you to do?

What would you do different next time?

How do you know that is the right answer?

Why do you think ____?

Why did you choose ____ over ____

Can you put one on top?

How do you think ____ felt when you ____?

Strategies

1. Be aware of children's reactions. Teachers and caregivers should reassure children through hugs, cheers, and hold them in their laps if they welcome these touches. (Remember, some children prefer to be comforted in other ways.)
2. Pay attention to infants' signals that they are overwhelmed. Give them some quiet time or extra time cuddling to help them recover. Take the children out of situations where there are too many people, too much noise, or too much stimulation of any kind.
3. Teachers and caregivers should talk about their own feelings with the children. Use words to describe those emotions.
4. When the child is experiencing emotions use feeling words to acknowledge and label those emotions such as "You're very mad!" "You look sad." This helps the child to feel understood and learn to use words to describe feelings.
5. Understand that expression of feelings (both positive and negative) is important to healthy emotional development. Children need to express both types of feelings and have adults accept these feelings.
6. Provide adaptive equipment and materials when a child needs support to be active and successful in program routines and activities. When children are able to participate, they feel a sense of belonging and security.
7. Focus on each child's positive qualities and accomplishments. Avoid talking about children as good or bad, or messy or neat.
8. Accept the toddler's mistakes as a natural process of learning and exploring. Use supportive language such as "Oh, the milk spilled. Let's get a paper towel and clean it up," rather than "You're so clumsy. You made a mess."
9. Encourage independent choices so children can feel a sense of control and success. For example, have children decide how to play and when they need to go to the toilet. Let them do things for themselves even if they do not do it exactly as they have been told.
10. Provide opportunities for children to repeat successful activities until they are ready to move on to something more challenging. Have many different toys available to children at the same time.
11. Use transition objects or comfort toys to help children adjust to changes in routines or settings.