

A GUIDE TO ASKING OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS

Cultivate and encourage your child to think about their learning and to develop their STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) knowledge by asking open-ended questions.



Open-ended questions are questions that require more than a simple 'yes' or 'no' response. By asking open-ended questions that start with 'Why,' 'How,' or 'What,' children are encouraged to describe and extend their thinking, increase their language development, give meaning to their experiences, and develop STEM knowledge and skills.



Interacting with children in sensitive and responsive ways is foundational to fostering all children's learning (DEC, 2014). Using open-ended questions can be a powerful way to foster positive interactions between you and your child. Asking open-ended questions lets you join in and expand on your child's interests, focus, and intent as they explore, play, and interact with others throughout the day (DEC RP INT4). Asking open-ended questions also helps scaffold your child's learning and promotes your child's problem-solving behavior (DEC RP INT5).

Some Tips

- **Always follow your child's lead and interests**
- **If you get a 'yes' or 'no' for a response or no response at all, try rewording the question another way, or simplifying the question**
- **You may also need to model how to answer an open-ended question for children who may be new to it**
- **If you get a surprising or unique response, expand upon the response, and ask, "Tell me more about..."**
- **Remember to provide at least three seconds for your child to respond**
- **Encourage your child to ask their own questions and test their answers**
- **Follow us on [Twitter \(@STEMIIEE\)](#) for daily STEM prompts**

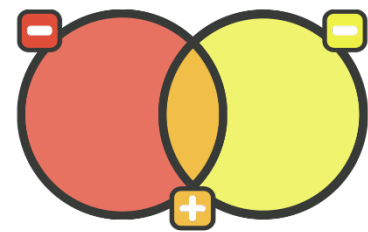
Ask open-ended questions that encourage recalling information and extending critical thinking. Feel free to substitute italicized words for specific vocabulary.



Open-Ended Questions

- How are *[these]* different? Alike/Same?
 - How can we make *[this]* work?
 - How can we work together to solve this problem?
 - How can we...?
 - How could you change...?
 - How did you come up with that solution?
 - How did you do *[that]*?
 - How do you know...?
 - How do you think *[this]* could work?
 - How does *[this]* compare with *[that]*?
 - How might you do *[this]* differently next time?
 - How should we test this solution?
 - How would you describe *[this]* to someone else?
 - How would you improve...?
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- I wonder how *[that]* happen?
 - I wonder why....

HOW?



If?

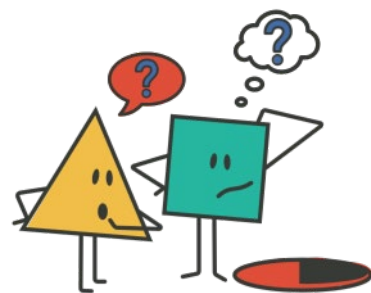
- If we did not have *[this]*, what do you think life would be like?
- If you could build anything, what would it be?
- If you could invent anything, what would it be?



- Tell me about what you are doing.
- Tell me about what you made/designed/built/created.
- Tell me about...

- What can you do about *[this]*?
- What can you do with *[this]*?
- What could you add?
- What did you notice about *[this]*?
- What do you know about *[this]*?
- What do you know about...?
- What do you predict will happen?
- What do you think comes next?
- What do you think will happen if...?
- What do you think would work?
- What do you want to know about *[this]*?
- What does *[this]* remind you of?
- What happened when you tried to...?
- What is a new way to do *[this]*?
- What is your plan?
- What questions do you have about *[this]*?
- What should we do next?
- What would you do differently next time?
- What would you do if...?

What?



Why?

- Why did you choose *[this]* over *[that]*?
- Why do you think *[this]* changed?
- Why do you think...?