

# 7 QUESTIONS THAT'LL GET YOUR KIDS TO TALK

*This school year, I have seen a shift in my oldest son. Last year, when he would come home from school, he couldn't stop talking about his day. Now, most of the time, I get one-word answers when I ask questions. Because of this, we made a rule that he couldn't use the words "good," "fine," or "OK" when we ask him about school.*

*Instead of getting frustrated, I asked some friends with older boys how they get their kids talking and they gave me some great advice. They each told me it's all about extending the conversation with great follow-up questions. Here are 7 questions to ask kids to get them talking.*

## **1. How did that make you feel?**

Your kids may not want to talk about their feelings, but our feelings provide important information. Asking this question acknowledges that it's OK to express our feelings and it also will give you insight into more topics worth discussing. This question expresses your concern for your child.

## **2. Why do you think \_\_\_\_\_ is that way?**

When talking about current events, school, or everyday life, this question allows you to hear how your kids are processing the world. Even if they don't have an answer, it forces them to think more deeply about what they are communicating to you.

## **3. What are your thoughts in this moment?**

There are times when we genuinely do not know what our kids are thinking. Instead of getting frustrated, ask this question. You may know what they are thinking, but let them process and communicate their thoughts. Tip: refrain from asking this question during heated discussions with your kids because it may cause more conflict than clarity.

## **4. Did it turn out how you thought it would? Why or why not?**

This question is good when kids share a story they heard, a situation they were in, or a problem they faced. It helps you gain insight into how they perceive cause and effect. It also lets you learn their thought process and sets you up for more questions and conversation.

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## 5. Can you help me understand?

Asking this question with genuine concern will communicate that you want to understand what is going on. When you don't understand what your kids are trying to tell you, this question prompts them to explain.

## 6. What do think you should do about It?

As your kids grow, our role begins to change from caregiver to coach. As we coach our kids, we help teach them how to solve problems and navigate situations on their own. This question lets us hear what they think and helps us coach them through whatever they're going through.

## 7. On a scale of one to 10, how important is this to you?

This question is the first in a series you can ask that helps kids solve problems on their own. I asked it when my son was struggling to get his homework done: "On a scale of one to 10, how important to you is finishing your homework?" He answered honestly with a "five." So, I asked what he'd need for that number to change to seven or eight—, in order for finishing his homework to feel more important to him. Ask your kid the same question and he or she might say, "It would be a seven or eight if I knew I could play outside as soon as I finished it." Give your kid permission to do that, and suddenly, finishing homework feels more important to him or her—, and you got your kid talking about the problem.

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**When was the last meaningful conversation you had with your kids?**

**When you try to talk to your kids do they lean into the conversation or do they try and get out of the conversation?**

**Do you use conversation for connection more than correction?**

**Where is the best location to have good conversations with your kids? (Car, bed, throwing a football, etc?)**