

Strategies for talking about school with your child.

When your child first gets home from school in the afternoon, they'll probably be tired and hungry or thinking about other things. So, **easing the transition from school or after-school activities to home** can help your child feel more like talking.

It's best to avoid asking your child a lot of questions straight away – this can be overwhelming for your child. You can just let your child know that you're glad to see them and talk about non-school topics for a while. Younger children will probably also like unpacking their bags and going through any notes before you ask about school.

Saving questions about homework for later on can also take the pressure off!

Every afternoon or evening will be different. Even if your child usually likes to share their day with you, there'll be days when they don't want to talk. Sometimes it's a matter of sensing your child's mood and picking the right moment. Some days there might not be a right moment at all, and that's OK.

Simple, positive and specific questions about parts of the day can get your child talking. It's good to use questions that invite more than a 'yes', 'no' or 'OK' response. For example:

- What's the news from school today?
- What was fun?
- What did you like best at school today?
- What does your classroom look like at the moment?
- What did you do in class after recess?
- Who did you hang out with today?
- What subjects did you do today?
- What topics are you working on in science at the moment?

Tips for talking about school with primary school children.

These tips can help you get a conversation going:

- Make time to talk. This can often be when you're doing something with your child. For example, your child might like to talk when you're walking the dog or preparing dinner together.
- Give your child your full attention if they want to talk with you about their day.
- Take seriously whatever your child tells you. For example, you can say things like, 'That's really interesting. Then what happened?' or 'And how do you feel about that?'
- Use respectful language when you talk about the school and teachers with or in front of your child. For example, 'I can see that's frustrating, but Ms Adams is your teacher, and you need to speak respectfully to her', or 'Yes, that seems unfair, but perhaps you don't know the whole story'.
- Use active listening techniques. These can help you pick up on your child's feelings and work out whether they want to talk.

50 Questions to ask your child about school other than 'How was school today?'

1. What made you smile today?
2. Tell me an example of kindness you saw/showed?
3. Was there an example of unkindness? How did you respond?
4. Does everyone have a friend at recess?
5. What was the book about that your teacher read?
6. What's the word of the week?
7. Did anyone do anything silly to make you laugh?
8. Did anyone cry? How did you help them?
9. What did you do that was creative?
10. What is the most popular game at playtime?
11. What was the best thing that happened today?
12. Did you help anyone today?
13. Did you tell anyone "Thank you?" Why?
14. Who did you sit with at lunch?
15. What made you laugh?
16. Did you learn something you didn't understand?
17. Who inspired you today?
18. What was the peak and the pit?
19. What was your least favourite part of the day?
20. Was anyone in your class gone today?
21. What made you feel safe at school today?
22. What is something you heard that surprised you?
23. What is something you saw that made you think?
24. Who did you play with today?
25. Tell me something you know today that you didn't know yesterday.
26. What is something that challenged you?
27. How did someone fill your bucket today? Whose bucket did you fill?
28. Did you like your lunch?
29. Rate your day on a scale from 1-10. Tell me why.
30. What positive choices did you make today?
31. How were you brave today?
32. What questions did you ask at school today?
33. Tell us your top two things from the day (before you can be excused from the dinner table!).
34. What are you looking forward to tomorrow?
35. What are you reading?
36. What was the hardest rule to follow today?
37. Teach me something you learned today.
38. If you could change one thing about your day, what would it be?
39. Is there anything on your mind that you'd like to talk about?
40. Who did you share your snacks with at lunch?
41. What made your teacher smile? What made them frown?
42. What kind of person were you today?
43. What made you feel happy?
44. What made you feel proud?
45. What made you feel loved?
46. Did you learn any new words today?
47. What do you hope to do before school is out for the year?
48. If you could switch seats with anyone in class, who would it be? And why?
49. What is your least favourite part of the school building? And favourite?
50. If you switched places with your teacher tomorrow, what would you teach the class?