

Ask thought-provoking questions to build your child's thinking skills

Talking with your child every day is a great way to build thinking skills—especially if you ask certain kinds of questions. Experts recognize six categories of thinking skills and suggest you ask your child questions that involve:

1. **Recalling knowledge.** Discuss facts your child knows. “Who is the president?” “What is the capital of Virginia?” Certain words will help with this, such as who, when, what, where and list.
2. **Understanding.** When your child learns about things, check the depth of his comprehension. “Can you explain one cause of the Civil War?” Use words such as explain, estimate and predict.
3. **Application.** In real-life situations, how will your child use what he knows? “How would you apply what our country learned from the Civil War to life today?” Include words like apply and experiment in your questions.
4. **Analysis.** Often things can be divided into groups, such as types of animals. Have your child compare and contrast things. “How are fish and humans different?” Talk about differences, similarities and comparisons.
5. **Evaluating.** Ask what your child thinks about things. “How have smart phones changed our lives?” Some useful words are how, why and what.
6. **Creating.** Ask your child if he can design his own way to solve a problem. Use words such as invent and what if.

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