



Asking Questions and Making Guesses

Your child has been learning science every day of his life. That's because science involves things that we do naturally each day: asking questions, using our senses, and discovering new ideas. Scientific thinking is one of the skills your child will need in order to be ready to start school. And many of the things you do with him every day, from infancy through preschool, will help to build these skills. You will be preparing your child to do well in school when you help him at home. Try these activities:

INFANT:

- Show your child a toy and then put it behind your back. Ask your child, "Where did it go?" Then bring the toy back and say, "Here it is!" Your child will become curious and begin to wonder where the toy went and if it will reappear.

TODDLER:

- Listen to what your child says and respond to her curiosity. Show your child that you are truly interested in her questions by engaging in a conversation and answering her questions. For example if your child asks, "How do the wheels go round?" Say to your child, "Yes, the wheels do go around. Let's see how they move." Show her how the wheels on a truck move or pretend a round container top is a wheel and rotate it.
- Read aloud to your toddler every day. Read stories to your child with a lot of pictures. As you read the story, ask your child, "What do you think will happen next?" Act out parts of the story with your child.

PRESCHOOLERS:

- Talk to your child by asking him questions and encouraging him to notice things. "I wonder how you make the color green." Write down his ideas. Tell him all the ideas he came up with. Tell him "Now we have some wonderful ideas. Which ones do you think will make green?" When you have decided together which ideas to investigate, ask, "What can we do to find out which idea will make green?"
- Create a simple plan together and decide what each of you will do to find the answers. You might visit the library to find a book on colors, ask someone in your family or neighborhood, or check on the web. The two of you can set up an experiment with different color magic markers, paints or food coloring. Each time you try different colors, talk about the different colors they make. Congratulate your child when she makes green.

Book Suggestions:

Let's Pretend. Debbie Bailey. AnnickPress, 1999

What's What: A Guessing Game. Mary Serfozo. Margaret McElderry Books, 1996.