

What Do You Think About Open-Ended Questions?

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What Are Open-Ended Questions? Open-ended questions are those that do not have one correct response and that require more than a one-word answer. Questions that encourage children (and adults) to think through what is being asked and to use language to provide a full answer, including their thoughts and feelings, are open-ended ones. Open-ended questions are ones that require children to use their brains, to problem solve, make decisions, and use language.

Here are a few examples of open-ended questions:

- Tell me about your painting.
- Tell me about your family.
- How did you build this?
- How do you think you could reach that truck that rolled really far under the shelf?
- How does that make you feel?
- What would you like to do next?
- What did you do on the playground?
- Why do you think that will work?
- What supplies will you need?
- What do you think would happen if you dropped this ball into the water?
- What do you think will happen at the end of this story?



Here are some examples of closed (not open-ended) questions:

- What color is that?
- What number is this?
- What shape is that?
- What is your name?
- What is your address?
- How old are you?
- How many is this?
- Where is your jacket?
- Are you finished with lunch?
- Do you like peas?

Why Ask Open-Ended Questions? Using open-ended questions encourages cognitive (intellectual) development. It helps children learn higher-level skills, such as problem solving. Open-ended questions help children practice their language skills, develop a stronger vocabulary, and engage in communication skills that promotes social development.



Open-ended questions also encourage children to express their opinions and allow them to tell you about things that are important to them. Helping children talk about what they feel and what matters to them is a way you can be supportive of them in their social and emotional development. Open-ended questions can help you evaluate children and their learning. If you listen you will find out what they know, what they do not know, what they want to know, and much more. So, what are you waiting for? Ask away!

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