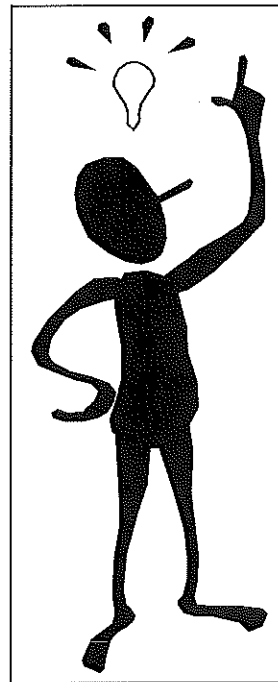
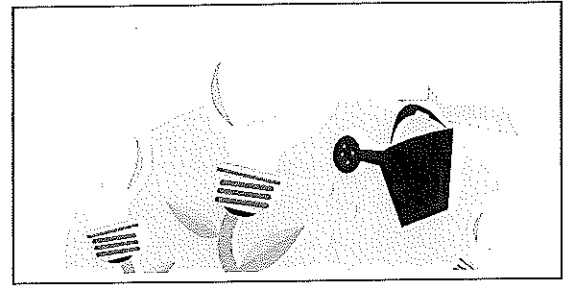


## Open-Ended Questions to Help Children Think

- Can you describe what happened?
- Can you think of a new way to do it?
- Can you help me think this through?
- Do you have any other ideas?
- How are they alike, different?
- How could we make it work?
- How could we work together to solve this?
- How did that happen?
- How did you feel when you finished it?
- How did you get that to work?
- How did you know that?
- How did you work it out?
- How do you explain it?
- How might you do it differently?
- Tell me about how you worked together.
- Tell me about it.
- Tell me about the character (books).
- Tell me about what you built, made, created.
- Tell me about what you saw.
- What can we do to get it to work?
- What do you think will happen next? (books)
- What did you see happening?
- What do you like best about it?
- What do you notice about \_\_\_\_?
- What do you think caused it to change?
- What do you think would happen if you \_\_\_\_\_?
- What do you think will happen next?
- What happened at the beginning, middle or end of the story (books)?
- What did you learn?



- What makes it work?
- What did you notice happening?
- What problems did you have?
- What was easy?
- What was hard for you to do?
- What would you do different next time?



**Extend children's thinking by:**

- Ask questions that encourage language development (verbal, written, and receptive).
- Paraphrase—repeat what the child said. Then add extra information to keep the child thinking.
- Add new vocabulary. Use new words like “observe”, texture words (sticky, rough, silky), measurement words (gigantic, tiny, humongous, miniscule), etc.

**Remember:**

- If you can answer “yes” or “no” the question is not open-ended.
  - Children are thinking so it takes time for them to respond. Be sure to allow them this time.
-

# ***Discussion Questions***

## **What is...**

- What is something you dislike about yourself?
- What is something you do well?
- What is your favorite room in your home and why?
- What is a good neighbor?
- What is the worst thing parents can do to their children?
- What is your favorite time of day?
- What is your idea of a dull evening?
- What is the best way to treat meddlesome people?
- What is something you are optimistic about?
- What is something you are pessimistic about?
- What is your most indispensable possession and why?
- What is the meaning of "He laughs best who laughs last"?
- What is your favorite song and why?
- What is the best birthday present you ever received?
- What is the best birthday present you could receive?
- What is something that makes you feel sad?
- What is your favorite book and why?
- What is something that really bugs you?
- What is something that really makes you angry?
- What is the best advice you ever received?

- What is your favorite holiday? What makes this holiday special?
- What is your favorite day of the week?
- What is your favorite month? Why?

**What if...**

- What would happen if you could fly whenever you wanted? When would you use this ability?
- What would happen if there were no television? Why would this be good? bad?
- What would happen if everyone lived in space? What type of houses would they live in? What type of clothing would they wear? What type of food would they eat? How would they travel?
- What if cows gave root beer instead of milk?
- What if all the streets were rivers? What would be different?
- What would happen if people never co-operated? Why do you think it is important to co-operate?
- What would happen if it really did rain cats and dogs?
- What would happen if animals could talk? What are some of the questions you would like to ask animals?
- What would happen if you could become invisible whenever you wanted to? What are some of the things you could do that you cannot do now?
- What would happen if everyone wore the same clothes?
- What would happen if you threw a piece of trash on the ground? What if everyone did?
- What if you could walk up walls and across ceilings?
- What would happen if you loved your neighbor as yourself? What if everyone did?
- What would happen if you grew taller than trees? How would this change your life?

- What would happen if children ruled the world?
- What would happen if there were no cars, buses, trains, boats, or planes? How would this change your life?
- What if everyone lived under water? Where would people live? What games would children play? What would school be like?
- What would happen if you found gold in your backyard?
- What would you do if a bully bothered you on your way home?
- What would you do if you did very poorly on a test?
- What would you do if a friend borrows things from you but never returns them?
- What would you do if you were the teacher and everyone forgot their homework?
- What would you do if you were in the middle of the lake and your boat began to leak?
- What would you do if Your friend had a broken leg? How would you cheer him up?
- What would you do if you saw little bugs in your salad?
- What would you do if you woke up in another country and no one could understand you?
- What would you do if you ordered an ice cream cone and you forgot to bring money?
- What would you do if someone got in front of you when you were in line at the movies?
- What would you do if your jelly sandwich fell upside down on the floor?
- What would you do if only one hot dog is left and neither you nor your friend have had one?
- What would you do if two of your best friends went to the movies without inviting you?
- What would you do if the surprise party was for you but you weren't surprised?

- What would you do if you got a present you didn't like?
- What would you do if you were at home and your homework was at school?
- What would you do if you dropped the cookie jar and it broke?
- What would you do if you were invited to two parties on the same day?
- What would you do if you promised to feed your pet and you didn't?
- What would you do if someone said you did something wrong and you didn't?
- What would you do if your new shoes felt fine in the store but now they are hurting?
- What would you do if someone told you a joke that you don't think is funny?
- What would you do if an hour before the party you remember you don't have a gift?
- What would you do if a friend comes to your house and his/her mom doesn't know he's/she's there?
- What would you do if you had four math problems marked wrong that were right?
- What would you do if you found a magic wand?
- What would you do if you wanted to be friends with someone who spoke no English?
- What would you say if someone told you it was all right to steal from a large department store?
- What would you do if you saw a friend cheating--report it, confront the friend, nothing--and why?
- If you could have been someone in history, who would you have been?
- If you could only take 3 people with you on a trip around the world, who would you take and why?
- If you could give any gift in the world, what would you give and to whom?

- If you could live anywhere in the world, where would it be?
- If you received any sum of money as a gift, what would you do with it?
- If you could do whatever you wanted to right now, what would you do?
- If you were principal of this school, what would you do?
- If you were a mouse in your house in the evening, what would you see your family doing?
- If you were five years older you would...
- If you were lost in the woods and it got dark, what would you do?
- If it were your job to decide what shows can be on TV., how would you choose?
- If there were no rules, what do you think would happen?
- If you owned a store, what would you do to discourage people from stealing from you?
- If you could participate in an Olympic event, which one would you choose and why?
- If you could break the Guinness Book of Records it would be for?
- If you had to describe yourself as a color, which would you choose?
- If your friend told you of a secret plan to run away from home, what would you do and why?

**What do you think...**

- What do you think of 3D movies?
- What do you think someone your age can do to help reduce the amount of pollution in our environment?
- What do you think the world needs now?

- What do you think your friends say to each other when you're not around?
- What do you think about the amount of violence on T.V.?
- What do you think about people polluting the environment?
- What do you think about having set rules for people to follow?
- What do you think about people who are inconsiderate of others?
- What do you think should be done to keep people who are under the influence of alcohol off the road?
- What do you think the world will be like when you are a grown up?
- What do you think about ghosts?
- What do you think of someone who has bad manners?
- What do you think about people who take advantage of others?
- What do you think about when you can't fall asleep?
- What do you think courage means?
- What do you think makes a good friend?
- What do you think makes a happy family?
- What pollutants do you think do the most damage and why?
- What things do you think are beautiful?
- What do you think about students having to wear school uniforms?

**What...misc.**

- What do you like most about yourself?
- What do you like to do in your free time?



- What kind of animal would you like to be and why?
- What kind of trophy would you like to win?
- What TV or movie star would you like to invite to your birthday party?
- What does "Clothes make the person" mean to you?
- What does "Have your cake and eat it too" mean to you?
- What does "The early bird gets the worm" mean to you?
- What do we mean when we say, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"?
- What does "You can't take it with you" mean?
- What do we mean when we say, "You can catch more flies with honey than with vinegar"?
- What do we mean when we say, "Hitch your wagon to a star"?
- What does "still waters run deep" mean to you?
- What does "There are two sides to every coin" mean to you?
- What does Canada mean to you?
- What are you afraid of? Why?
- What are junk foods?
- What are some nutritious foods that you like?
- What are some rules you have to follow at home?
- What are some examples of prejudice?
- What is more important to you, appearance or personality?
- What is most important to you in a friend--loyalty, generosity, honesty--why?
- What is something that makes you melancholy?
- What makes your best friend your best friend?
- What makes you feel safe?
- What makes you laugh?
- What would you invent to make life better?
- What would you do to entertain your family without spending any money?
- What effects does watching violence have on people?
- What effects do cigarette and alcohol advertising have on young people?
- What kind of TV. commercial would you like to make? Describe it.
- What kind of pet would you most like to have--monkey, snake, goat--why?
-

- What kind of program do you enjoy most on TV--detective shows, comedies, game shows--and why?
- What advice would you give a new student?
- What advice would you give to someone who stole something but now feels guilty?
- What things are better than going to school? Why?
- What talents do you have?
- What three words would describe you right now?
- What four things are most important in your life?
- What color makes you think of happiness?
- What has been the most fun activity at school so far?
- What quality do you like about yourself--creativity, personality, appearance--why?
- What eccentric behavior in a friend disturbs you the most?
- What parts of nature do you like best?
- What do you do for exercise?
- What is the most ludicrous outfit you can think of?
- What is the funniest dinner you've ever had with your family?

#### **How...**

- How do you feel when it's your birthday? Why?
- How do you feel on the first day of winter? Why?
- How would you feel if you were going to be on a show? Why?
- How do you feel when you do something wrong?
- How do you feel when you do something that is very good?
- How do you feel when you play a trick on someone?
- How would you feel if a new child moved into your neighborhood?
- How do you think the new child would feel?
- How do you feel when you have had a fight with your best friend?
- How do you think your friend felt?
- How do you feel when you are in bed with the lights out?
- How do you feel when you want something very badly and you cannot have it? Why is this so important to have?
- How do you feel on a warm sunny day?
- How do you feel when you stay with a babysitter?
- How do you feel when you're leaving home on vacation?

- How do you feel when you sleep at someone's house?
- How do you feel during a thunderstorm?
- How do you feel on the first day of school?
- How do you feel when your parents are upset with you? Why do they become upset with you?
- How do you feel on Thanksgiving? What are you thankful for?
- How do you feel on (any holiday)?
- How do you feel when something scares you? What do you do when this happens?
- How would you feel if someone told you that you were his or her best friend?
- How do you feel about your appearance?
- How would you change the world to make it better?
- How do you think eating junk food affects you?
- How do you have the most fun--alone, with a large group, with a few friends--and why?
- Explain how to play your favorite game.
- How would you describe your house to someone who has never visited there before?

### **I wish...**

- I wish I had a million... Then I would...
- I wish I had one... because
- I wish I could be like.... This person is special because....
- I wish to be a \_\_\_\_\_ when I grow up. Then I will....
- I wish there were a law that said..... This would be a good law because....
- I wish I could forget the time I ..... because....
- I wish trees could..... because....
- I wish I could see..... because.....
- I wish I could learn..... because.....
- I wish I didn't have to eat..... I don't like this food because.....
- I wish everyone would learn to ..... Then everyone would.....
- I wish I never.....
- I wish I had one more chance to..... Then I would.....
- I wish there was an electric.....
- I wish I had enough money to.....
- I wish everyone loved.....

- I wish all children would.....
- I wish everyone had.....
- I wish I could touch.....
- I wish animals could..... If they could, then.....
- I wish I looked like.... because.....
- I wish there were no more.....
- I wish I didn't have to.....
- I wish I could go to.....
- I wish there really was..... If there really was, then.....
- I wish I could hear.....
- I wish I could give.....
- If all my wishes came true, I would.....

### **When...**

- When you are angry, how do you look?
- When are you happiest?
- When have you felt lonely?
- When do you feel proud?
- When was the last time you cried and why?
- When a friend was in an embarrassing situation, what did you do?
- When it might hurt their feelings, how do you feel about telling your friends the truth?
- When might it be bad to be honest?
- When someone picks on someone else, how do you feel? What do you do?
- Once, when you were very frightened, what happened?
- Once, when you were embarrassed, what happened?
- Once, when your feelings were hurt, what happened?
- Describe a time when you felt vengeful.
- When you have a problem who do you talk to? Why?

### **Which...**

- Which quality best describes your life--exciting, organized, dull--and why?
- Which quality do you dislike most about yourself--laziness, selfishness, childishness--and why?
- Which place would you most like to visit--Africa, China, Alaska--why?

- Which holiday has the most meaning for you-Canada Day, Thanksgiving, Valentines Day--and why?
- Which is least important to you--money, power, fame--and why?
- Which is most important to you--being popular, accomplishing things, being organized--and why?
- Which is your favorite Star Wars character (or other movie/book/t.v. show, etc.)? Why?

### **Why...**

- Why is it important to be honest?
- Why is important to have good manners?
- Why do you think adults smoke/drink?
- Why is exercise important to someone your age?
- Why do you think some people encourage others to smoke/drink?
- Why do you think the rules you must follow are good or bad?
- Why would it be good to be honest?
- Why have men and women usually only done certain types of work?
- Why should or shouldn't a man stay home to care for the house and children while his wife goes to work?
- Why do you think some people take advantage of others?
- Why do you think prejudice exists in the world?
- Why would we say that someone is "passing the buck"?
- Why would a Prime Minister have a sign on his desk which read, "The buck stops here"?
- Why do you think tact is an important quality?
- Why is it not wise to squander your money?
- Explain why we say, "dead as a door nail".
- Think of your favorite toy. Why do you like it best?
- Think of the best teacher you ever had. Why were they a good teacher?
- Do you think there is too much fighting on t.v. Why or why not?
- Do you think it is necessary to have alcohol at a party in order to have a good time?
- Does it bother you to be around someone who has bad manners?
- Should there be a dress code in places such as school, restaurants, and places of business? Why or why not?

- Should animals be used for medical research?
- Should the Canadian Government financially support Olympic teams?
- Should people be prohibited from smoking in certain places?
- Families are important because...
- Would you like to be famous? Why or why not? What would you like to be famous for?
- Who or what has had a strong influence in your life?
- Where would you prefer to be right now--mountains, desert, beach--and why?
- Should you have to do chores around the house? Why or why not?
- Should you be required to wear a bike helmet? Why or why not?
- Should skateboards be allowed on sidewalks?
- Where do you think we should go on our class fieldtrip this year? Why?
- Should you have to take tests in school?
- Should cellphones be allowed in school?
- Can television (or videogames) influence your behaviour? How?
- Should schools be year-round?
- Should junk food be banned from schools?
- Should students be required to learn a second language?

Here are my favorite 50:

1. What is the most amazing thing about you?
- 2.
3. What would be the ideal allowance and how you spend use it?
4. Tell me about the best teacher you ever had?
5. If a genie would give you only one wish, which would you pick, and why?
6. When you feel sad, what cheers you up?
- 7.
8. If you could change three things about yourself, what would they be?
9. ...
10. What are the qualities that make a good friend?
11. Tell me about your favorite toy when you were little?
12. Tell me about something I never knew you did when you were little.
13. What do you say to comfort yourself when something scares you?
- 14.
15. ...
16. What do you think are the characteristics that make a good parent?
- 17.
18. What is the most enjoyable thing our family has done together this year?
19. At what age do you think kids fall in love?
20. What do you think is beyond the stars?
21. What is the nicest thing a friend has ever done for you?
- 22.
23. How do you think kids are affected by divorce?
- 24.
25. ...
26. If you were going to have a weird, unusual pet, what would it be?

27. Do you think honesty is always the best policy? Why or why not?
28. What have you done, in school or sports or anywhere, that you are especially proud of?
29. Which of your friends are you proudest of? Why?
30. Have you ever had a dream that really scared you? What was it about?
31. Describe the most beautiful place you have ever visited?
- 32.
33. Have you ever gotten really lost? If so, tell me about it. How did you feel?
- 34.
- 35.
36. What is the grossest thing you can think of?
37. Is there anybody in history that you have read about that you would like to be?
38. What do you think is the right age for marriage? Why?
39. Tell me three things you remember about kindergarten.
40. What do you think makes a person popular?
- 41.
42. If you knew a friend of yours had stolen something, what would you do about it?
43. If you could trade lives with somebody you know, who would it be?
44. How do you think you would feel if you thought you were going to be the first person to meet someone from outer space? What would you say or ask?
45. What would you do if you were invisible for a day?
46. What is your very earliest memory as a very little kid?
- 47.
48. Do you ever have a dream that comes back over and over? If so, what is it like?
49. Why do you think some people don't like animals?

And the all time family favorite - What would you do if you won the lottery - the BIG one.

Source: <http://leladavidson.hubpages.com/hub/Top-50-Open-Ended-Questions-for-Sparking-Conversation-With-Kids>