

Tips for Responding to Curiosity

Tell the child what you see him doing, and use the words curious and curiosity. He will know that you value curiosity, as well as learn a new word.

“You are curious about that noise, aren’t you, Ramon? Let’s find out what’s making that bell ring.”

Take pleasure in the child’s curiosity.

“Oh, Terri, that was pretty funny. You put that toy in your mouth and made it squeak.”

Join the child in his curiosity and model your own.

“I wonder where your teddy bear is, Matthew. You looked under the blanket. Where else could we look? Let’s look behind the bookshelf.”

Help the child relate her discovery to prior experience or knowledge.

“You’re smelling that flower, Lance! I’m going to smell it, too. Oooo, that’s a sweet smell. Smell it again. What does it remind you of?”

Encourage the child to notice a few details.

“Oh, Josiah, you found an inset! Let’s look at it closely. What do you notice?” (Josiah points to the legs.) “Yes, I see legs, too. (He points to feelers.) I wonder what the feelers are for.” (He says, “Black”) “Yes, it’s all black. Let’s look it up in the insect book when we go back inside.”

To extend the child’s curiosity, ask an open-ended question related to what the child is doing.

“Felicity, why do you think that blue jay is going to eat more than his share of the seeds?” (Felicity explains her thinking.) “If your prediction is right and he does eat all the seeds, what should we do?”

Help the child find answers to his questions, rather than answer them yourself.

“That’s a great question, Dante! How can you find out?... You think your mother might know? Shall I help you write down so you won’t forget to ask her tonight?”