

Parent Information

Questions to Ask Your Child About Their School Day

It's a common lament amongst parents of school-age children – 'I ask him what he did at school today, and all he says is 'Nothing!', 'Don't know' or 'I played''. This can be frustrating at any time, but especially so if your child is starting a new school, or if you suspect all may not be well at school. But there are ways in which you can gently encourage your child to open up a little more. Try some of these approaches:



- **Time** - Don't start asking questions straight away – children often need time to process their day and have some 'downtime' at home before they are ready to talk about things.
- **Open Questions** - Ask 'open' rather than 'closed' questions. A closed question only requires a 'yes' or 'no' or another single word answer, for example, 'Did you have a good day at school?' Open questions need a fuller answer: 'What was the best thing that happened at school today?'
- **Facts** - Start with questions about facts and events. 'So you have a different teacher this year. What is she like compared to Mrs X from last year?'
- **Positivity** - Ask positive rather than negative questions. For example, 'What is your favourite lesson?', 'What was the best game you played at playtime?', 'Tell me the names of two people you played with today.'
- **Avoid Emotive Words** - Avoid the use of emotive words like 'happy', 'sad', 'unkind', as these can shut conversations down.
- **Social Events** - Ask questions about your child's social time at school – playtimes, lunchtimes, friendships - as well as their learning.
- **Give Targets** - With younger children especially, it can help to ask questions involving numbers: 'Tell me two funny things that happened today,' or 'Tell me three other children who sat on your table at lunch.'

Don't ask	Instead Ask
How was school?	What's the best thing you did today?
Is your teacher nice?	What was the best thing your teacher told you today?
Were the kids in your class nice?	Who did you enjoy working/playing with today?

Was the work hard?	Which work did you enjoy the most today?
Did you play with anyone at playtime?	What did you talk about at playtime? What games did you play?
How was lunch?	Who did you sit with at lunchtime? What did you have for lunch?