



ASKING & ANSWERING “WHY” QUESTIONS @ HOME



“Why” questions

Asking and answering WH-questions is an important language foundation and a necessary skill for being a good communicator. Some WH-questions are easier (such as “what” and “who” questions), and others are more difficult (“when” and “why” questions). Typically, by age 4, children are expected to ask and answer “why” questions.

Before you ask “why” questions, tell your child what the question word means so they understand what you are asking them. “Why” tells us the reason we do something. For example, “why do we eat breakfast?” “Because we are hungry in the morning.”

Give your child a few more examples of “why” questions and then choose something to play with your child. Set up something your child enjoys doing but make sure you will have an opportunity to talk during the activity (dolls, blocks, games, etc).

How to Practice:

While your child is playing, ask them various “why” questions about what they are doing and help him come up with an answer.

- For example, if they are playing with a baby doll, you could say “Why are you giving the baby a bottle?”
- Remind them, “I asked you a ‘why’ question. Your answer should start with ‘because’. Why are you giving the baby a bottle? Because...”
- Then pause and see if your child can fill in the rest of the answer. If not, help them out with a reason (“Because the baby is hungry”). As your child gets better at this, you can begin to ask “why” questions throughout the day.



Daily Practice Ideas

Day 1: While playing with toys/games/crafts ask ‘why’ questions about their actions.
Ask: Why did you feed the baby? Why did you pick that colour?

Day 2: Go for a walk and ask ‘why’ questions about things you see. Ask questions such as: Why is the snow melting? Why do birds have wings? Why do we wear rainboots?

Day 3: During daily routines/chores: Why do we wash our hands? Why do we take baths? Why do we brush our teeth?

Day 4: While reading books together ask ‘why’ questions about the pictures and characters. Ask: Why are they happy/sad? Why did the character ____? Why did you pick this book?

Day 5: Take turns! Ask your child a “why” question, then tell them it is their turn to think of a question to ask you!

See back of page for additional information and resources!

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Check out these links for more resources and activity ideas

- Practice 'why' questions while reading stories. Read a page or the whole story first, then ask your child questions relating to the characters, plot and pictures. For example, while reading [Dear Zoo](#), ask about 'why' he sent each animal back and "Why did he keep the dog?" After reading [Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!](#), ask questions such as "Why can't the pigeon drive the bus?" "Why is the pigeon upset?" "Why is the pigeon happy at the end of the story?"
- Check out this [free WH questions gameboard!](#) Or this [free spring WH questions game!](#)
- Use [these visuals](#) for helping your child answer 'why' and other WH questions.
- Visit [this website](#) to get more info and ideas to work on 'why' questions!

Outdoor Scavenger Hunt

Outside is a great place to engage your little learner in asking and answering "why" questions.

Try going out for a scavenger hunt! Make a list of things you could find outside and have your child help check them off the list. Every time you check one off the list ask them a 'why' question about it. For example, "You found a bird! Why does a bird have wings?"



NATURE WALK:	
Find, collect or photograph these items from nature below!	
FIND SOMETHING THAT'S...	☒
SMALLER than a squirrel	
LARGER than a squirrel	
the color GREEN	
a ROUGH texture	
a SMOOTH texture	
the color BROWN	
makes a SOUND when you step on it	
BIGGER than an acorn but SMALLER than a fox	
a kind of INSECT	
a kind of BIRD	
In the SKY	
a SOFT texture	
a BUMPY texture	
HEAVIER than a lunch box	
a kind of FLOWER	
an EARTH TONE	
able to FLY	
able to make a SOUND	
colorful	
BEAUTIFUL to look at	

