

## Notes Home

### How Was Your Day at School?

"I ask my child, 'What did you do today at school?' and he always says, 'Nothing.' How can I get him to tell me more about his day?"

"My child comes home every day and complains about school. All I hear is that she didn't do anything and no one wanted to play with her. I know she enjoys herself at school, so how can I get her to tell me more good things about her day?"

"My caregiver does pick-up and drop-off so I feel out of touch with what my child is doing at school. How can I get more information about his day-to-day school experience?"

Parents are naturally curious about their child's school experience. It is important to remember that it is impossible for young children to come home every day with a full and accurate report of their day. They may not have the language skills to answer any but the simplest yes or no question. They may not be able to remember all the activities they did or the classmates they played with. The parts of their day that stand out will often be the most negative ("No one would play with me.") or the most dramatic ("So and so had a bloody nose.") or the most general ("I played."). Some children cherish the boundary between home and school and are reluctant to tell you too many intimate details from their day.

It is part of family life that each person has something to say in the evening when a family member asks, "How was your day, Honey?" Here are a few questions that you might try asking your child as a way of beginning a conversation about his or her day.

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The following questions range from simple to complex; choose questions that are appropriate for your child's age and language abilities.

Was there playdough at school today?

Did you go to the roof today?

What did you have for snack today? Did you like it?

Was there painting today?

What areas did you play in? Were any areas closed?

Was there any new thing to do at school today?

What is your favorite song at singing time? Can you teach it to me?

Did you bring any artwork home today?

What did you talk about at Meeting today?

Did anyone have a problem at school today? How did it get worked out?

Tell me one good thing and one bad thing about your day at school.

Is there someone in your class who you really like to play with? What do you do together?

Did anything funny happen at school today?

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Keep in mind, these questions are conversation starters. There is no guarantee that your child will want to talk about school every day, that she will always give you a full picture of the events of the day, or that she will be able to remember accurately events after they have happened. The goal is NOT for you to get a daily play-by-play, but simply to engage your child in talking with you about school.

Also, think about your own responses to “How was your day?” at the end of your day at work or at home. Do you sometimes list all the bad things that happened before you arrive at the good? Do you sometimes tell about one event that stood out and forget some of the others? Do you sometimes not want to talk about your day at all?

Your child may never reveal to you all the details of her school experience; but, by asking specific questions, by being a careful listener, and by respecting your child’s need to keep some things private, you may be able to learn more than you would from a simple “How was your day at school?”

Meredith