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TALKING ABOUT ADHD

21 Foolproof Questions to Get Your Child to Open Up About School

“How was your day?” “Fine.” It’s not exactly illuminating conversation, is it? Unfortunately, many kids with ADHD don’t leap at the opportunity to talk to Mom and Dad about how their day at school went — especially if it went poorly. Here’s how parents can encourage better communication (hint: it starts by asking the right questions).

BY ADDITUDE EDITORS

Kids don’t like to share their thoughts and feelings about school, especially if they have had a rough day. Unfortunately, many children diagnosed with attention deficit disorder ([ADHD or ADD](#)) have a lot of rough days at school. Many of them find school a slog — seven hours of falling short of expectations and feeling bad about themselves. Who would want to talk about those experiences every day?

Liz Evans, a mother of three and a former educator who blogs at Simple Simon and Company ([simplesimonandco.com](#)), wanted to get more out of her two tight-lipped children, Simon and Grace. When she asked how school was, they grunted “Fine” or “Good.” Nothing else.

Evans wanted more feedback, as many parents do. So she blogged about a list of [questions to ask](#) that get them talking. According to Evans, some questions have led to interesting conversations, hilarious answers, and insights into how her children think and feel about school. Her question-and-answer strategy worked. Simon and Grace started speaking in full sentences. If your child is quiet about school, try out some of Evans’s questions on him or her:

1. What was the best thing that happened at school today? (What was the worst thing that happened at school today?)
2. Tell me something that made you laugh today.
3. Whom would you like to sit by in class? (Whom would you not want to sit by in class? Why?)
4. Where is the coolest place at the school?

5. Tell me a weird word that you heard today (or something weird that someone said).
6. If I called your teacher tonight, what would she tell me about you?
7. How did you help somebody today?
8. How did somebody help you today?
9. Tell me one thing that you learned today.
10. When were you the happiest today?

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11. When were you bored today?
12. If an alien spaceship came to your class and beamed someone up, who would you want them to take?
13. Who would you like to play with at recess whom you've never played with before?
14. Tell me something good that happened today.
15. What word did your teacher say the most today?
16. What do you think you should do/learn more of at school?
17. What do you think you should do/learn less of at school?
18. Who in your class do you think you could be nicer to?
19. Where do you play the most at recess?
20. Who is the funniest person in your class? Why is he/she so funny?
21. What was your favorite part of lunch?

Evans's favorite answers came from questions 12, 15, and 21. The "alien" question gives kids a non-threatening way to say who they would rather not have in their class, and encourage a discussion to ask why, potentially uncovering issues you didn't know about.

"When I asked question 3," says Evans, "I discovered that one of my children didn't want to sit by a best friend in class anymore — not out of a desire to be mean but in the hope that she'd get the chance to work with other people."

"As my kids get older," says Evans, "I know I'm going to have to work harder to stay engaged with them — but it's going to be worth the work."

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