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Fostering Your Child's Inner Geek Through Questions & Conversations

When someone is “geeking out” they are enjoying exploring or experiencing something they are passionate about. Each of us has a childhood-like sense of wonder and appreciation inside of us for something. We love to learn more about it—we just can’t get enough. But how do we foster that inner geek in our children? How do we help them develop that kind of passion for learning science? The best way to ensure a child’s academic success is to give him or her a love of learning; that means education. But contrary to what it seems, the word educate comes from the Latin educere, which means to “to draw out from within.”

That means that learning happens not when we simply ‘deposit’ new information into the mind of a child but when we lead that out of them. And for Generation Z learners, when learning is EPIC—experiential, participatory, image-rich, and connected—children learn best. How do you do this? A process we call “Chalk, Talk, Walk.” In Chalk you see it happen; in Talk you share your ideas about it; in Walk you try it on your own. And it turns out that one of the best ways to accomplish the Talk is through questions. Below are different categories of questions and examples of each to use with your child to spark talk about learning experiences.

Informational – the questioner seeks knowledge about a particular fact, observation, or conclusion:

- *What happened?*

Interpretive – the questioner seeks to understand the meaning of an observation or a conclusion:

- *What do you mean by that?*

Explanatory – the questioner seeks clarification; asks for things to be made understandable:

- *Why do you think that happened?*

Procedural – the questioner seeks clarification of methods or processes:

- *How did you get that to happen?*

Relational – the questioner seeks clarification of the connections between various elements:

- *“Remember when we did?...How is this the same or different than that?”*

Verificational – the questioner attempts to confirm the validity of an observation or procedure:

- *How do you know that?...Would it always work that way?*

Heuristic – the questioner attempts to enable a person to investigate further on their own:

- *What would happen if?*

Evaluational – the questioner attempts to determine the worth of an observation or conclusion:

- *How important do you think _____ is to what happened?*

Elaborative – the questioner attempts to get the person to deepen their understanding of their ideas:

- *Can you say a little more about that?*



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Fostering Your Child's Inner Geek Through **Activities & Books**

The following is a list of science resources that you can explore with your child to spark curiosity, wonder, and create EPIC learning experiences. Many of these products and kits may be available through your local library to check out, can be found online, or might be available at your local toy and hobby store.

- Bee-Bot STEAM Kit
- Bloxels Builder Kit
- Code-a-Pillar STEAM Kit
- Code & Go Mouse Kit
- Dash and Dot STEAM Kit
- Goldie Blox STEM Kits
- Hamilton Buhl Animation Studio Kit
- Kiwi / Koala Crates
- K'NEX Stem Building Kit - Levers and Pulleys
- K'NEX Stem Building Kit - Bridges
- LEGO — BOOST Creative Kits
- Liquid Discovery Tubes STEAM Kit
- Little Bits STEAM Kit
- Little Passports STEAM Kits
- Makeo Cardboard Construction Kit
- Makey Makey STEAM Kit
- MEL Science Kits
- Osmo Coding Awbie
- Ozobot STEAM Kit
- Peaceful Playbox
- Raddish Food Science Kits
- Steve Spangler Science Kits
- Sphero SPRK+
- Strawbees Maker Kit

Book Recommendations:

1. *Eureka! Science Activities and Stories* by Donna Farland Smith for grades K-2
2. *Eureka! Science Activities and Stories* by Donna Farland Smith for grades 3-5
3. *The Questioners Book Series* by Andrea Beatty
4. *Science With Scarlett: What Color Will It Be?* by Gary Abud, Jr.



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