

# Spark Creative Thinking Throughout the Day

## Adding Open-Ended Questions to Your Routine

*Pittsburgh Public Schools Early Childhood Coaches of 2016*

Have you ever had children lined up, waiting to wash their hands, when your mind goes blank? Have you ever been sitting with children in a center and realized you were asking all yes or no questions?

Open-ended questions engage children, stimulate curiosity, inspire creativity, develop language skills, build vocabulary, and cost programs nothing! For maximizing opportunities to learn, intentional questioning is especially important as children engage in freely chosen activities and experience wait time.

Hang the following lists of open-ended questions in your classroom in spots where you, visitors, and volunteers can easily see them, and let the engagement begin!

### **PITTSBURGH PUBLIC SCHOOLS EARLY CHILDHOOD COACHES**

is a cohort of 11 mentors supporting the educational component of our district and partnership classrooms throughout our great city.



### **Questions for the Book Area**

- › What would you do if \_\_\_\_\_?
- › What was your favorite part of the story? Why?
- › Do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (main character) solved the problem in a good/bad way?
- › Why do you think \_\_\_\_\_ (character) did what they did?
- › How could you have solved the problem in a new way?
- › If you were \_\_\_\_\_ (main character), what would you have done differently?
- › What is another way this story could end?
- › What if the story took place in a \_\_\_\_\_ (farm, city)? How would the story change?
- › Would you recommend this book to a friend? Why or why not?
- › Which character would you like to be friends with? Why?



### Questions for Science Exploration

- › Tell me about your \_\_\_\_\_.
- › What would happen if you \_\_\_\_\_?
- › What might you try instead?
- › What does it look like?  
Feel like? Smell like?
- › Is there anything else you could try/use?
- › How do you think we could do that?
- › Tell me about what happened.



### Questions for Mathematical Thinking

- › What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?
- › How many ways can you \_\_\_\_\_?
- › Can you explain this to me?
- › Tell me about your thinking.
- › How did you figure that out?
- › Can you find a different way to \_\_\_\_\_ (pattern, sort, divide)?
- › Who has more/less? How do you know?
- › How else could we solve/try this?
- › How are you going to do that?
- › What else can this be used for?



### Questions for Block Play

- › Tell me about what you built.
- › Why did you choose to use these blocks? Why didn't you use the other blocks?
- › Why do you think your structure fell?
- › How can you keep your structure from falling again?
- › What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?
- › Tell me a story about what you built.
- › Can you tell me all the different parts you used in your structure?
- › How can we change the structure?
- › What does the structure remind you of?
- › Where would we find this kind of structure in real life?



### Questions for the Art Area

- › Tell me how you made your project.
- › Are there any changes you would make to your project? Why? How would you make them?
- › Tell me a story about your picture.
- › Why did you choose to use \_\_\_\_\_?
- › How are you going to \_\_\_\_\_?
- › What will you do next?
- › What would happen if you used \_\_\_\_\_?
- › What can we make with these materials?
- › Now that you're done, how does your project make you feel?
- › Where do you think we should put this?



### Questions for Hand Washing

- › I wonder why we have to use soap and water to wash our hands.
- › Can you think of other things we need to use soap to wash? Why do we wash them?
- › How do you think soap is made?
- › What would happen if we didn't wash our hands before breakfast/snack/lunch?
- › Do you think all soaps are the same or different?
- › When you are at home, when do you use soap?
- › What would happen if we did not use water to wash our hands?
- › What did we do today to get our hands dirty?



### Questions for Dramatic Play

- › Tell me about what you are doing/ cooking/making. Tell me more.
- › Where are you going today? What will you do there?
- › How do you take care of a baby/a puppy/grandma?
- › What do you do when someone is sick or hurt? What do you do if a baby is crying?
- › What would happen if \_\_\_\_\_?
- › If you are \_\_\_\_\_, what will you need? What ingredients/tools do you need? How can you get them?
- › How do you know how to do that?
- › What will you do next?
- › What do you think about \_\_\_\_\_?
- › What will happen tomorrow?



### Questions for Tooth Brushing

- |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| › Why do we brush our teeth?  | you eat at home? What does it taste like?   | › What do teeth need to be healthy? How can we help them stay that way? |
| › What would happen if you didn't have a toothbrush to brush your teeth? What could you do? | › Do you think we could make our own toothbrushes? What materials would we need to make our own toothbrushes? | › Have you ever had a wiggly tooth? Can you tell me about it?           |
| › What do you think toothpaste is made of? How would you make toothpaste better?            | › What would happen if we did not use water to brush our teeth?   | › How are your teeth the same as/different from grown-up teeth?         |
| › When you taste toothpaste, does it taste like something                                   | › What does a dentist do for your teeth?  |   |

Reproduced with permission of copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.