

Promoting Scientific Thinking

Children are naturally curious and love to investigate things; that's how they learn. Young children begin scientific discovery in infancy as they start to figure out how the physical and natural world works and what it means to them. Children make these discoveries through observations, forming ideas, and trying them out in new or different situations. A child might be thinking.... "I wonder if the button on this long rectangle object does the same thing as the one on mom's phone?"

You can support your child to be a little scientist by:

- Telling your child what you observed. "I noticed the flowers have started to bloom."
- Asking your child what the child observed.
- Making an "I wonder..." statement. "I wonder why the flowers have started to bloom."
- Asking "what," "how," and "why" questions. "What do you think will happen if we pick the flower?" "Why do you think the flowers are blooming now?"
- Offering new tools or materials to support your child's exploration. "Here's a small gardening tool, how do you think you could use it in the dirt?" "Would you like to water the flowers with a cup or a bottle?"



When asking discovery questions, it is more important to support your child in the exploration and the thinking process rather than coming up with the correct answer. Children who are encouraged to explore and discover independent of the "correct" answer are naturally more curious and better able to learn as they grow into adulthood.



References: Perry, B. D. (2000, August). Curiosity, Pleasure, and Play: A Neurodevelopmental Perspective. Advocate: Houston Area Association for the Education of Young Children, pp. 9-12; Parlakian, Rebecca. (2016, October 17). Science as a Way of Thinking. <https://www.zerotothree.org/resources/1614-science-as-a-way-of-thinking>