

How to Ask Open-Ended Questions

First, *what is an open-ended question?* An open-ended question is any question that cannot be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.”

Articles:

[Examples of Open Ended and Closed Ended Questions:](#) Examples are provided to distinguish the difference between open and closed ended questions. Additionally, examples are provided to teach the reader how to turn a closed-ended question to an open-ended one.

[50 Thought-Provoking Questions for Teens:](#) A helpful list of 50 open-ended questions that might be helpful for ice-breakers, long-walks, or opportunities during a match outing where you are able to have a long conversation with your Little.

[30 open-ended questions for kids so you don't get a 'yes' or 'no' answer':](#) Additional list of questions that leave room for a longer conversation.

Helpful Tips:

From interacting with youth, we know that sometimes young people have a lot to share and others may be more reserved.

1) **Engage in the conversation:**

Use prompts such as “how cool!,” “really?,” and “tell me more.”

2) **Watch your body language:**

As a listener, are you leaning in, nodding your head, and showing your speaker that you are interested in what is being said?

3) **Summarize and ask clarifying questions to show your Little you are listening:**

If your Little is telling you a story about how something made them feel, you can respond; “wow, I am hearing you say that all of those events had you feeling really great about your day. What else makes you feel great?” or on the contrary, “shucks, I am hearing you say today was a tough day. What are some things you do to feel better after a tough day?”

These are great opportunities for our Bigs to share relatable stories with your Little. They are not looking for you to have all the right answers, just to show that you care and that you are listening.

4) **Avoid passing judgement:**

Rather than responding, “why did you do that?” you can rephrase to “how else would you have handled that?” or “talk to me about how you came to that conclusion and/or resolution?”

Ted Talks:

[10 ways to have a better conversation:](#) “When your job hinges on how well you talk to people, you learn a lot about how to have conversations -- and that most of us don't converse very well. Celeste Headlee has worked as a radio host for decades, and she knows the ingredients of a great conversation: Honesty, brevity, clarity and a healthy amount of listening. In this insightful talk, she shares 10 useful rules for having better conversations. “Go out, talk to people, listen to people,” she says. “And, most importantly, be prepared to be amazed.”