

# Modeling Questions to Improve Student Learning

One great way that parents can support their students at home is by reinforcing the thinking skills they are learning in school. This helps students understand how their thinking skills can be transferred from one context to another, particularly a real-world context. Modeling how to ask good questions is an excellent way for reinforcing these skills.

Below are simple questions you can ask your student for twelve different purposes:

## **1. To assess understanding**

What is the most important idea from our discussion?

Can you explain this concept in your own words?

Can you draw a diagram to illustrate this idea?

## **2. To ask a student to clarify a vague comment**

Could you elaborate on that point?

Can you explain what you mean?

## **3. To prompt students to explore attitudes, values, or feelings**

What are the values or beliefs that inform this argument?

What is your initial reaction to this argument?

## **4. To prompt students to see a concept from another perspective.**

How do you think that this issue is viewed by those with whom you disagree?

How does that concept apply to this new problem?

## **5. To ask a student to refine a statement or idea**

When does that principle apply? Always? Only under certain conditions?

Would you say, then, that you disagree with the author?

## **6. To prompt students to support their assertions and interpretations**

How do you know that?

Which part led you to that conclusion?

## **7. To direct students to respond to one another**

What do you think about the idea just presented by someone else?

Do you agree or do you see the issue differently? Explain.

Can you think of another way to solve that problem?

## **8. To prompt students to investigate a thought process**

What are the assumptions that informed the design of this?

What are the assumptions that these two arguments share?

## **9. To ask students to predict possible outcomes**

What might happen if this practice were to be outlawed?

What would be the result if a different set of assumptions were used to set up this?

Would you get a different result?

## **10. To prompt students to connect and organize information**

How does this shed light on the concept we discussed before?

Can you develop a graph or table that organizes this information in a helpful way?

## **11. To ask students to apply a principle or formula**

How does this principle apply to the following situation?

Who can suggest how we might use this new formula to solve the problems we encountered before?

Under what conditions is this equation not valid?

## **12. To ask students to illustrate a concept with an example**

Can you think of an example of this phenomenon, drawn from what you have learned in school?

Can you point us to a specific example that led you to that conclusion?

Can you identify a painting or design that exemplifies that idea?