



"How Was Your Day?"

We all want to hear about our child's day. Parents alike want to know what their children are learning, if new friendships are being formed, what their children are excited or nervous about, what they did at recess, and more. Now, how many of us parents have asked the "How was your day?" question and in return, received a quick "fine" or "ok" as the only response?

For many parents, the information they receive about what's happening at school ebbs and flows, especially once their kids grow older. Yet even younger children may sometimes be reluctant to share the details of school life.

As new school routines are forming, now is the perfect time to tweak your approach to the "How was your day?" question. We have compiled this list of open-ended questions and tips that hopefully will foster more open lines of communication with your child.

For Younger Kids:

- What was the funniest thing that happened at school today?
- What will you remember MOST about your day today?
- How did somebody help you today? How did you help someone?
- What word did your teacher say most today?
- If an alien spaceship came to your class and beamed up someone, who would you want them to take?
- What are you grateful for today?
- To whom in your class could you be nicer?
- What made you laugh today?
- What was the hardest thing you had to do today?
- What was the best thing that happened in school today?
- Were you bored today?
- Did you hear any new words at school today?

- Can you show me something you learned (or did) today?
- Tell me what you read in class? (Or what book did your teacher read in class?)
- What could you change to make it a better day tomorrow?
- Tell me one thing you learned today that you did not know yesterday.
- Tell me three times you used your pencil today.
- Tell me about the game you played at recess today.
- Take time at the dinner table to talk about a good and bad thing that happened that day. One family we know goes around the dinner table asking each family member their “Rose” (best thing) and “Thorn” (worst thing).

For Middle School/Older Kids:

- If today at school was a movie, what movie would it be?
- To whom in your class could you be nicer?
- If today had a theme song, what would it be?
- What are the top three things that you hear people say in the halls?
- Who did you help today? Who helped you today?
- If you had to go to only one class every day, which class would it be?
- What part of the day do you look forward to? What part of the day do you dread?
- Which class are you learning the most in?
- How would you improve upon a challenge you faced today?
- What are you grateful for today?
- Tell me one thing you learned today that you did now know yesterday.
- If your teacher called me tonight, what would she say about you?
- Who is the funniest person in your class?
- What are you looking forward to at school tomorrow?
- Did you get frustrated with anything at school today?
- If you could choose, who would you like to sit by in class?

A final tip: **listen, listen and listen**. Once your child starts talking about the day, wait...

As parents, we tend to jump in with more questions, but pausing is important. A child gains confidence as she relates her day and you affirm her. We've found that when you want them to open up, just sitting them down and asking questions isn't often effective. BUT, if you, say, trap them in the car (gotta love carpool!) and talk to them while you are driving... and they don't have to make eye contact... they may be more willing to offer up more information or ask more questions.

Do you have any additional communications strategies that have worked well for your family? We'd love to hear about them! Please email them to our Communications Office at aamore@stmschool.net.

(Questions adapted from: Parents Choice.org; Liz Evans/Huffington Post; Parent's Magazine, and personal experience.)