# Don't be quick to answer kids' queries

# PARENTS CORNER



on't be quick to answer questions

"Who should I invite to my party, mom?" "Do you think I should buy a CD with my birth-day mone?" "Why don't we eat at restaurants more often?" Children sure ask a lot of questions. It can be fun to give opinions. It feels good to know the answers. As parents we may feel it is our duty to answer each question without delay. Beware, there are negative side effects to giving instant answers. The problem is, if we are too quick to answer questions, we steal golden opportunities from our children to analyze and explore the answers for themselves.

#### Bounce ideas first

answers for themselves.

Bounce ideas first
Often, when a child asks you a
question, he has already been
thinking about the answer.
Because kids are likely to have
some idea of what the answer.
Because kids are likely to have
some idea of what the answer is,
we can be helpful to our children
by letting them bounce their
ideas off of us first. Let's see
what they already know before
we step in with an answer.
Answering too quickly robs kids
from exploring their own ideas.
If we want our kids to develop
sharp thinking skills, we need to
give them opportunities to
explore their thoughts.
So, what do you do when a
child asks you a question?
Acknowledge the importance of
the question, "Hmm, that's an
interesting question." Give the
question back to the child, "Why
do you think the sky is blue?
Ask your'child, "How else could'
you find the answer to your
question?" This gives the child a
chance to think of alternate
ways to discover and learn. The
process of searching for the
answer may end hand questions back
to your children, they may surprise you with how much they
already know. Recently, a mom
from one of my workshops had a
success by using this technique.
While driving home from school,
her daughter asked, "What is
probation?" Instead of her usual
instant answer, mome from asked,
"What do you think it is?" Her
daughter hasked, "What is
probation?" Instead of her usual
instant answer, mome asked,
"What do you think it is?" Her
daughter hasked, "What is
probation?" Instead of her usual
instant answer, mer einforced her understanding and mom was then able

Jewish Slant

# Jewish slant on hospice care

Hospice of Michigan will prospect a Jewish Perspective at 7.15 p.m. Thursday, April 19 at Adat Shalom Synagogue in Farmington Hills.

Arthur Horwitz, owner and publisher of the Detroit Jewish News, will moderate a panel of experts from Hospice of Michigan, including: Dottle Deremopresident and CEO; Dr. John Shalom S

248-43-5900 or valit the Wester was whomorg.
Hospice of Michigan provides compassionate care to people living with a terminal illness and support to loved ones. Every day the organization serves more than 850 people in 45 counties throughout Michigan.

water?"
Parent: "Because I'm thirsty."
Child: "Why are you thirsty?"
Parent: "Because I ate salty
peanuts."
Child: "Why did you ent salty
peanuts..."

peanuts..."
These types of questions are enough to drive you crazy! We can pull ourselves out of the end-less loop of questioning by either giving the question back, "Why do you suppose! I'm drinking water," or giving an acknowledging statement, "You're wondering about that."

Stop potential battles

to clarify the parts she didn't know while her daughter listened attentively.

Sometimes a child's question can leave us feeling frustrated Giving the question back to the child frees a parent and gives ownership of the answer to the child. The child also feels pride in the answers she comes up with.

Child: "Vegetables stink! Why do I have to eat them?"
Parent: "That's a good question. Why do you think?"
Child: "Because there are vitamina in them."
Parent "You thought of a very important reasonl Can you think of another?"
There are some questions that seem to have no end to them, you know the type:
Child: "Why are you drinking water?"
Parent: "Because I'm thirsty."

The child quickly exclaimed, "Because it's required by law," and be started doing his homework. Battle over before it began.

A learning opportunity

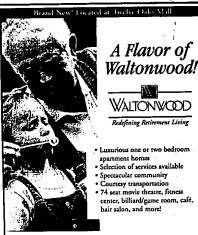
### A learning opportunity

A learning opportunity
I present an art program at
the school. Every presentation
features an artist's work for the
children to see and learn about.
At the end of the presentation, I
ask. "Would you like to know
how I learned about today" as
trist?" The kids nod their heads
and wait for an answer. Instead
of answering, I turn the question
back to them, "Whore do you
think I might have learned
about this artist?" Quickly the
hands stort raising. Immediately, I get two familiar responses."
books," and "the Internet." The
hands go down.

I'll say, "There are other sources besides books and the Internet." Slowly a few hands begin to raise as the thinking becomes their responsibility. Once the kids start thinking, they come up with all kinds of creative ideas such as: "You can look through magazines." "You can took through magazines." "You can the artist," "You can us an encyclopedia," "You can get an audio tape on the artist, "You can get an audio tape on the artist, and "You can ask an art teacher." By having kids actively participate in thinking of the answer, they explore and retain ideas and become more open to hearing other peoples ideas as well.

When is it most helpful for a parent to answer children's questions? Our answers helpmost after our children air their thoughts. Having shared their own ideas, they become more receptive to really hearing what we have to say. By not instantly answering children's questions, by listening with interest to their ideas on a subject, children process their thoughts, develop active minds, and contemplate solutions.

Marilyn Suttle brings skill building workshops to corporate and educational settings. E-mail her at Masuttle@accom or visit her web site: http://member.aol.com/MaSuttle.



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