



HELP CHILDREN DISCOVER ANSWERS WITH PROJECT-BASED LEARNING

Project-based learning is another way parents can help their children learn about and understand the world around them.



In project-based learning, children create solutions to questions or problems that they might face in the real world. This approach to learning is being used with students of all ages, from kindergarten to graduate school. It can be used at home too.

TEACHERS use project-based learning. Instead of giving students information or facts to memorize, teachers ask questions that help students find information and apply it to the real world.

Project-based learning helps children

- take control of their own learning,
- build critical thinking skills,
- understand how problems are solved in the real world, and
- remember information they learn longer than traditional, direct instruction.

PARENTS can use project-based learning at home. Encourage your children to explore and find answers to their real world questions. You can work individually with your own children, or you can help them discover resources in their community that they can use as they look for answers.

For example, your child may ask, “Why do I have to eat vegetables?” This question provides an opportunity for your child to learn about vegetables and why they are important to health. You can help your child find facts from reliable sources. Perhaps your child could talk to a doctor or dietitian. He or she could go to the library to check out books about the topic, or surf the Internet to learn more. Your child may become so interested in the project that together you’ll start a vegetable garden in your own back yard.

Questions can lead to project-based learning

- How can we make the kite fly higher?
- Where does milk come from?
- How did they make that building so tall?
- Who are you voting for?
- Why does gas cost so much? And many more ...

Examples of project-based learning

Second grade students were curious about the medicines a classmate was taking, and wondered why she had to see her doctor so often. With permission from their classmate and her family, the students began to learn about her condition, cystic fibrosis. First, they searched the Internet for information. Next, they invited a doctor to tell them about the disease. They discussed what they had learned. They then decided to raise money for a cystic fibrosis walk, and took part in the walk.

High school students asked, “How can we stop bullying?” They met with the school counselor to share their concern, did some research, and learned that bullying is an issue that involves students, school staff, parents, and the larger community. They shared what they learned with their friends, parents, and some teachers. They then asked the principal if they could have a school assembly to talk about bullying. With the school counselor they identified a speaker to share information and invited community members to participate. Later they formed a group including parents, school staff, and community members to develop an action plan to address bullying.

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