

Wellness Wednesday



February 22, 2023

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30 Questions To Ask Your Kid Beyond 'How Was Your Day?'

Want to have meaningful conversations with your child? Here are better questions to ask that may get them talking.

It's a time-worn script.

Kid comes through the door, announcing their presence with the thud of their backpack hitting the ground.

Parent: **with enthusiasm** "Hi! How was your day?"

Kid: **shrugs with apathy** "Fine — boring."
grunts unintelligibly

At dinner tables around the world, kids are telling parents that they did "nothing" at school all day. Most parents aren't quite sure how to respond. We want to know about what's going on in our kids' lives and to hear their thoughts and feelings, but there are dishes to wash, laundry to fold, homework assignments to complete. In the bustle of our everyday lives, calm moments appropriate for conversation can be so rare that when they do come along, we aren't quite sure what to do with them.

Adding to this challenge, as kids get older, they often want to keep the spheres of their social life and home life from overlapping.

"Part of development is that they're kind of pulling away from us as a family unit. They dive into their peers a little bit more, and that's healthy," Anjali Ferguson, a clinical psychologist who practices in Virginia, told HuffPost.

But when kids pull away, that doesn't mean parents should let go entirely. Ferguson suggests that we "stay curious," and have some idea of what's happening in their days so that when an issue arises, they'll know that it's safe to come to us, even with something serious.

We often expect kids to make conversation at the dinner table, but this face-to-face setup doesn't necessarily make them want to open up. Many parents find that their kids tell them a lot while in the car together.



"It's less threatening there," said Ferguson. "I'm not sitting him down at the table directly looking at him and telling him to answer all my questions. We don't have eye contact at that time because I'm driving and he's in the back — it feels less threatening too, and less demanding for him. So much information comes out in our 15 minute car ride home."

Another factor that may make the dinner table a less-than-ideal place to talk is the presence of siblings.

"Anytime you've got one-on-one time with a kid is good," said Ferguson. Apart from siblings and other adults in the household, "it just provides a bit more deeper connection, and it feels for the child like their individual perspective matters." These are good moments for more serious conversations.

Exactly when these moments occur is less important than our commitment to making them happen regularly. It can be too easy to slide into a routine that doesn't make space for conversation.

"Families that aren't talking about the hard things may find themselves in a pattern of co-existing without sharing the depth of life that they want," Dr. Larry Mitnaul, a child, adolescent and adult psychiatrist practicing in Kansas, told HuffPost.

"It can be a struggle to synchronize downtime throughout the day so that there are overlapping stretches of time together not obligated to some other pursuit," he said.

As parents, we have to take responsibility to protect this time and commit ourselves to being "available and not digitally distracted" by our phones or email, he explained.

"Teens know when we are not 'all in,'" Mitnaul added.

It's important that we are truly "coming from a place of non-judgment," explained Ferguson, and "wanting that connection more than control on our end." To see this through, we have to hold back our urges to critique something that our child says, or to jump in and fix a problem when what our child is really asking for is an ear to listen.

The environment, however, does not need to be perfectly idyllic. In addition to car rides, chores, errands or exercise may offer opportunities for some one-on-one conversation.

"Big moments and conversations often arise from the little moments," said Mitnaul.



If possible, maintain a regular conversation date with your child. This could be as simple as walking the dog together on Saturday mornings and stopping to buy donuts.

For those check-ins, Ferguson likes to start off by having a kid rate their day on a 1-10 scale.

"It gives them a bit of leeway," she explained. "'How was your day?' can feel really abstract sometimes, because it's just such an open-ended question. It doesn't have a ton of parameters, and kids like parameters in a lot of ways. So the more specific you can be about your questioning is also helpful," she said.

Here are some other ideas to get you started:

For young children:

- Who did you play with at recess today? What did you play?
- Who did you sit with at lunch?
- What was your favorite thing that you did today?
- Can you show me something you learned how to do today?
- What stories did you/the teacher read today?
- What was one thing that was challenging for you today?
- What was something that made you feel happy today?
- What was something that made you feel sad today?
- What was something you did that made you feel proud of yourself today?
- How were you brave today?
- Did anyone at school do something silly?
- Did you do anything new or different today?
- Did you help anyone today?
- Did anything surprising happen today?
- What was the hardest rule to follow today?
- Did anyone get in trouble today?
- If you could change one thing about your day, what would it be?

For older children and teens:

- What was your favorite part of the day?
 - Name a high and a low (or a rose and a thorn) from your day.
 - What was the most unexpected thing that happened today?
 - Did everything go exactly as planned today?
 - What challenges did you face today?
 - What made you laugh today?
 - Did anyone do something weird today?
 - Who is your favorite teacher?
 - Who is your least favorite teacher?
 - Did you do something kind for anyone today?
 - What kind of person were you today?
 - What are you looking forward to about tomorrow?
 - Is there anything on your mind that you want to talk about?
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BUFFALO CHICKEN LETTUCE WRAPS

(SLOW COOKER, INSTANT POT)

147.5 Calories | Prep: 5 mins | Cook: 4 hrs | Total: 4 hrs
Servings: 6 | COURSE: Dinner, Lunch | CUISINE: American



INGREDIENTS

For the chicken:

- 3 24 oz. boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 celery stalk, diced
- 1/2 onion, diced
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 16 oz fat free low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 cup cayenne pepper sauce, I used Frank's

For the wraps:

- 6 large lettuce leaves, Bibb or Iceberg
- 1 1/2 cups shredded carrots
- 2 large celery stalks, cut into 2 inch matchsticks

Making shredded buffalo chicken in the slow cooker is super easy, anyone can do this and you can use the chicken for everything from wraps and salads, to pizza toppings, sandwiches and more! I've now updated this with instructions for the Instant Pot as well!

What To Serve With Buffalo Chicken Lettuce Wraps:

- If you want something crispy, serve with baked chips on the side.
- If you prefer, you can turn this into a big chopped salad by simply serving this over a bowl over chopped lettuce.
- To keep it low carb, serve it with celery sticks or carrot sticks and blue cheese dip.

Nutrition Information

Serving: 1/2 cup + veggies, Calories: 147.5 kcal, Carbohydrates: 5.2 g, Protein: 25 g, Fat: 0.1 g, Sodium: 879 mg, Fiber: 1.5 g, Sugar: 1.5 g

Source: Skinnytaste.com



INSTRUCTIONS



Slow cooker method:

- In a slow cooker, combine chicken, onions, celery, garlic and broth (enough to cover your chicken, use water if the can of broth isn't enough).
- Cover and cook on high 4 hours.
- Remove the chicken from pot, reserve 1/2 cup broth and discard the rest.
- Shred the chicken with two forks, return to the slow cooker with the 1/4 to 1/2 cup broth and the hot sauce and set to on high for an additional 30 minutes. Makes 3 cups chicken.
- To prepare lettuce cups, place 1/2 cup buffalo chicken in each leaf, top with 1/4 cup shredded carrots, celery and dressing of your choice. Wrap up and start eating!

Instant Pot method:

- Combine chicken, onions, celery, garlic and broth (enough to cover your chicken, use water if the can of broth isn't enough) in the Instant Pot. Cover and cook high pressure 15 minutes. Natural release.
- Remove the chicken from pot, reserve 1/2 cup broth and discard the rest. Shred the chicken with two forks, return to the pot with the 1/4 to 1/2 cup broth and the hot sauce and saute 2 to 3 minutes. Makes 3 cups chicken.
- To prepare lettuce cups, place 1/2 cup buffalo chicken in each leaf, top with 1/4 cup shredded carrots, celery and dressing of your choice. Wrap up and start eating!

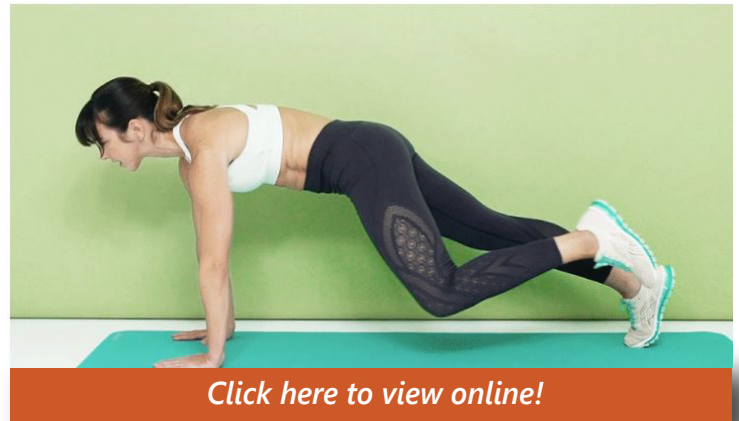
FEATURED EXERCISE

https://www.self.com/gallery/5-move-bodyweight-core-workout?utm_source=pinterest&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=onsite-share&utm_brand=self&utm_social-type=earned

Featured Exercise ► Triple Climber ✓

» Do it:

- Start in a high plank position, with your wrists directly under your shoulders, core engaged, hips level, and legs extended straight behind you. Lift your right foot a few inches off the floor.
- Draw your right knee to your right triceps. Then extend your right leg to return to a three-legged plank position.
- Draw your right knee to your chest (like a mountain climber), then return to a three-legged plank position.
- Draw your right knee to your left triceps (like a twisting mountain climber), then return to high plank (returning your right foot to the floor).
- Repeat on the other side.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



IT TAKES
21 DAYS
TO MAKE
OR BREAK
A HABIT



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