

Teacher talk and nurturing curiosity

Instructional technique	What this 'sounds like'
Actively invite students to pursue the things they show interest in. Show an interest in their questions - use the questions to stimulate investigations.	"I can see you are interested in the tadpoles. What are you noticing about them? What are you wondering? What might help you find out more?"
Model curiosity but wondering aloud - and show students you are comfortable with NOT knowing the answer. Share your curiosity with your students. Add YOUR questions to the wonder wall	"Oh! I've just noticed this tadpole is starting to grow legs? I wonder why it was the first one? I wonder when it will get the front legs? I've never really watched them swim before - it's got me thinking about what it must be like to have your body change so drastically like that! I'm trying to think about what other animals change from one kind of body to another..."
Model how satisfying it can be when you find out about something you are curious about...	"Do you remember yesterday, I was talking about the fact that I didn't really know much about my great grand mother? I have been really curious lately about her because I found these old letters...Last night I rang my Mum and I asked her to tell me a bit more about her. Guess what I found out? She was a teacher! Just like me! Isn't that amazing - now I have all sorts of new questions and my Auntie and my Mum are going to talk more with me this weekend..."
Use questions and prompts that encourage children to wonder aloud and to take their wonderings further...	<p>"What does that make you wonder?"</p> <p>"What a great question...where did that come from?"</p> <p>"What made you ask that?"</p> <p>"Why do you think this is happening?"</p> <p>"What puzzles you about this?"</p> <p>"Isn't this awesome? It just makes me want to find out so much more - how about you?"</p> <p>"Wow - this is kind of confusing but it really makes you want to sort it out...I wonder how we could get this clearer?"</p>
Resist the temptation to always answer children's question! By the time we are ready to ask a question - we usually know a little about what we are asking. Encouraging children to have a go at answering the question themselves can keep them much more engaged and curious and can help them be more specific about what they really want to inquire into.	<p>"That's such an interesting question. Do you have a few ideas already? How would you answer it now?"</p> <p>"Hm... I've often wondered that too - how do you think we could find out?"</p> <p>"Would you like some suggestions on how you could find out?"</p>
Attend to your body language - its not just what you say, it's the way that you say it.	When students show interest in something -we can quickly dampen curiosity by the way we respond...even without words. Crossed arms, disinterested facial expressions, patronising laughter, failure to listen attentively to what the child is saying - are just some of the cues that tell children that we don't value their interests...or that we will determined what is and isn't interesting in the classroom. Show the students that you are delighted by their inquisitiveness. Position yourself beside them as they watch the tadpoles in the tank. Share in their enjoyment. Sometimes saying very little but showing joy in the experience is the best curiosity cultivator of all.