

Ask Wisely for Success!

What is a 4 word question that is essential for your child's success?

The 4 word question that is essential for your child's success is: "What is your plan?"

Unless there is a plan for Financial Management, Time Management, Project Management and Problem Solving, there is little likelihood of being able to live independently and effectively manage the stuff and relationships of life. Both time and money tend to slip away very quickly if there is no plan to manage their use.

The 5 questions that form the basic outline of a plan are:

1. What am I going to do? Do a perception check. (A perception check is having the child tell back to you what he/she has heard). This is essential if the child has any kind of attention or learning problems or if the child is easily distracted.
2. How am I going to do it? Encourage Focused Curiosity that can result in the Discovery of a "way to do it".
3. When am I going to do it? Time management. This acknowledges that the child may have other scheduled activities and may involve prioritizing.
4. How long will it take me to do it? Time management, Organization and Prioritizing. This can teach a child to consider the possibility that unexpected factors may cause delays.
5. How will you know it has been done? Accountability. This not only signals "completeness", and provides the opportunity for the adult to give positive feedback, but also tells the adult that the child may be ready to tackle a more involved project where the stakes are higher.

Example: you want your child to sweep off the front walk and you tell him/her to do this and the answer is, "yes, I'll do it". Then you ask, "what is your plan?" The response is, "What do you mean, what is my plan?" You say, "If someone were to ask me for my plan for sweeping off the front walk, I'd say: the TV program I'm watching will be over in 5 minutes. Then I'll go into the garage, get the broom, go out to the front walk and sweep off the sidewalk between the old oak tree and the driveway. I think it should take me about 10 minutes.

Then I'll go back into the garage, hang up the broom and come and tell you the job has been done and you can check it."

Parents often narrowly focus only on teaching a child what to think/believe. Wise parents also teach their children how to think. Teaching a child how to think will help him/her establish a good foundation for developing a solid belief system.

Children are not born with well-developed thinking skills. These skills usually do not develop just by going through the daily stuff of life. Being taught and trained to think in terms of a plan will promote the development of thinking skills in a child. These skills include sequential thinking, organizing, prioritizing, time management and cause and effect. It is important for children to learn to think in terms of "a plan", and it is a parent's responsibility to teach/train them to do this.

Additionally, having a plan for relationships and a plan for serving others will engage the thinking processes, promoting stability in these areas.

Your child should become so tired of hearing you ask "What is your plan?" that he/she will soon say to you, "I know that you're going to ask me, 'what is my plan?', so here is my plan". When this happens, you will know that you've done a good job of parenting!

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