Asking Open-ended Questions in Childcare

Open-ended questions are questions that can have more than one right answer and require more than a yes/no answer. Open-ended questions encourage the child to consider their response and help to stimulate both thinking and language skills. This interactive approach allows the child to gain greater meaning from the experience and opens their mind to various possibilities.

Benefits of asking open-ended questions when engaging with toddlers

Asking open-ended questions demonstrates an interest in the child's perspective and opinion. The benefits of consistently asking open-ended questions include-:

- Stimulating the child to think beyond the obvious response
- Teaching the toddler to think through as many possibilities as possible before deciding on the best answer.
- Fosters a spirit of understanding and cooperation.
- Enables the child to express a range of feelings and emotions as well as their understanding of a particular subject.
- Gives the child room to explain and describe. This facilitates expansion of speech and vocabulary skills.
- The questions may cause the child to recall previous events which can help to stimulate memory skills and abilities.
- Creates a situation where the adult must engage with and pay attention to the child. This helps to make the child feel that their opinion and thoughts are valued.

Tips for using open-ended questions with children

Open-ended questions are a great way to encourage discussion and input. Here are some ways to get the most out of these questions while keeping things natural:

- A great way to get the child engaged is to use a combination of closed and open questions. By starting with a closed question – such as "*Did you watch the Olympics on Television?*" and then following up with open questions like "*What did you watch? And "How did you feel afterwards?*" you can open up a range of possible responses and contributions.
- Use language that encourages input from everybody. Questions that use the words *"Who can?"* tend to limit input whereas "*What are the ways we can?*" invites

Adopted from https://kidskinder.com.au/open-ended-questions-for-toddlers/