Go beyond the "how was your day?" question

For most parents, it is a familiar scene. During family dinner, you ask your child how their day was. Instead of receiving a detailed answer, you get a one-word response, blank stare or worse, a hostile reaction. How can you gain insight into your child’s daily life? Consider a different strategy.

Thought-provoking questions designed to engage will kick-start a conversation instead of ending it. But it takes practice. At first, you may receive a few sentences
out of your loved one. But as you fine-tune your game plan, it will yield lively, thoughtful, and even humorous conversations.

Questions that focus on social and emotional dynamics are an excellent starting point. Use the following list as a reference for creating conversation starters for your child. To keep your talks on track, follow up with questions, listen without judgment, and when appropriate, share your own unique experiences and insights.

**Here are suggested alternative questions:**

1. Did you see anyone be a friend to someone when they needed it?
2. Did you notice any mean or disrespectful behavior at recess?
3. Do you think your classroom rules are fair or unfair?
4. Was anyone disrespected in class?
5. Did you learn anything new about a group of people different from you?
6. Did you read a book or story that made you rethink your ideas about someone or a group of people?
7. Was there a time today that made you feel really good about an aspect of your identity?
8. Did you see any adults being role models in treating others with respect?
9. Did you feel like you belonged?
10. Did anything happen that seemed unfair?
11. Who did you feel most connected to at school and why?
12. How did you help someone? How did someone help you?
13. Did you notice anything that may be a problem for kids with disabilities?
14. Did you see a teacher stop bias or bullying?
15. Did you have a say about something important to you?
16. Was anyone talking or gossiping about mean behavior they saw online?
17. Did you see an adult do or say something to a student that might have embarrassed them?
18. Did you feel excluded?
19. Did you hear any stereotypes and if so, what?
20. Were there any special assemblies or celebrations and did it include everyone?
21. Did anyone stand up to bullying?
22. Did you learn about activism or taking a stand for something?
23. Did you see anything offensive on the walls or bulletin boards?
24. Who in your class is the most different from you? Do you think you two have anything in common?
25. If you could sum up your day with one emoji, what would it be?