

CONVERSATION STARTERS

CURRENT CULTURAL TRENDS ARE EXPOSING CHILDREN TO COMPLEX AND OFTEN CONFUSING TOPICS AT INCREASINGLY YOUNGER AGES. AS PARENTS, IT'S ESSENTIAL TO ENGAGE IN OPEN AND HONEST CONVERSATIONS THAT PROVIDE OUR CHILDREN WITH THE GUIDANCE AND SUPPORT THEY NEED TO NAVIGATE THESE SUBJECTS IN A WAY THAT ALIGNS WITH THEIR DEVELOPMENTAL STAGE AND FAMILY VALUES.

Some Ideas Regarding Safety at School:

- Can you tell me about your experiences using the restrooms at school? Do you feel comfortable and safe there?
- What do you do if you need to use the restroom at school? Is there anything that makes you hesitate to go?
- What are the restroom conditions like at your school? Have you noticed if they're always available to use?
- How do you feel about drinking water during the school day? What influences your decision to drink or not drink? (**Parent Tip:** Check your child's water bottle when they return home. If it's still full, it might be worth discussing whether they're avoiding drinking water at school to avoid restroom use.)
- How do you feel about your overall safety at school? Are there specific places or times when you feel more or less safe?
- What have you observed about how students interact with each other at school? Have you seen or heard about any conflicts or fights?
- Have you noticed anyone at school who seems to be having a hard time with others? What kinds of things have you seen or heard about bullying or harassment?
- How do you feel about the way teachers handle discipline at school? Are there things you think could be done differently?
- What are your thoughts on substances like drugs or alcohol in your school environment? Have you ever noticed or heard anything about these issues?
- If someone offered you something that looked like candy, what do you think you would do? Why?
- What do you know about vaping at school? Have you seen or heard of it happening?
- How do you feel when you're on the playground or in common areas at school? Are there any times when you feel uneasy?
- What is it like during recess in terms of adult supervision? Do you think there are enough adults around?
- What experiences have you had with bullying at school? Have you seen or heard of any incidents?
- How do you feel about your safety on the bus or when you're walking home from school? Are there any concerns you have?
- Can you share your thoughts on how physical interactions are handled at school? Have there been any times when something didn't feel right?
- Have you ever had a conversation with a teacher, staff member, or coach that made you feel uncomfortable? What happened, and how did it make you feel?

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Some Ideas on Political Ideology, Gender/Identity, & Sexuality:

- Can you tell me about your experiences using the restroom at school? Have you noticed anyone using a restroom that's different from their gender, and how did that make you feel?
- What do you know about terms like 'whiteness' or 'white privilege'? Have these topics ever come up at school, and what do they mean to you?
- Who are some people you know who identify as transgender or LGBTQIA+? What has your experience been like in understanding their identities?
- What kinds of symbols or flags have you seen in your classroom? How do these symbols make you feel or think about your classroom environment?
- What happens in your classroom during the Pledge of Allegiance? Have you noticed any students choosing to sit out, and how does that feel to you?
- What kinds of social or political topics have been discussed in your class? Have you heard terms like 'Black Lives Matter,' 'woke,' or names of political figures mentioned, and what do you think about those discussions?
- Can you share your experiences with how politics are talked about in your classroom? What sorts of political topics have come up, and how do those conversations usually go?
- What conversations about race or racism have happened in your class? How do you feel when these topics are brought up?
- Have there been times when you've been asked to share your pronouns in class or on assignments? How did that experience go for you?
- Has anyone ever brought up questions about your gender or sexuality? What was that experience like for you?
- What are the rules or norms about changing clothes at school? Have you noticed students changing, and how do you feel about that?

