

Conversation is Learning Too!

by Beverley Paine, South Australia

All too often I forget where most of my children's learning originates - in our everyday conversations! Most of the reading I have done over the last couple of months has reinforced this belief in me, and with the hindsight of twelve years of home based learning I know the truth of it. April, Roger and Thomas know a lot about the world they live in, not because they have read about it, or even seen in on the TV, but because we talk about things a lot. Anything can spark a conversation, and conversations often spark in-depth research, experiments and activities.

Although we often know the answers already, there are many times my husband Robin and I have taken a topic much further than the children are interested in, and have discovered much more about the world than we knew before. I love it - learning is fun and spontaneous, and it certainly covers all of the important things!

All too often reading, writing and arithmetic - the traditional "basics" - take precedence in our minds, and, in my experience, learning suffers as a result. Bookwork, because it leaves a tangible collection of records anyone can look at and judge as evidence of learning, is usually considered more important than the everyday learning derived from conversation. It can be hard, but why not put down the books, get on with real life, and simply enjoy the ensuing conversation, knowing that learning is happening!

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