**How to nurture the love for science in children**

**Source: Anita Kishore, Teacher & Chief Strategy Officer, BYJU’s& Parenting Blogger, The Economic Times**

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Science and the scientific community are the two main pillars of a society’s growth and development. Be it engineers, doctors or scientists, their expertise has contributed to shaping the world. The most recent example would be that of the COVID-19 pandemic, for which the best scientific minds across the world played a pivotal role in developing a vaccine, while also offering effective treatment and preventive measures to help us navigate the pandemic.

The significance that the scientific community holds in our lives further lays emphasis on nurturing our children in the field of science for our better future. To achieve this, parents have to understand that the path to a scientific career does not begin in undergraduate or postgraduate years. Rather in the early years of our children’s formal education—from kindergarten through grade 12.

India has the largest K12 system in the world with more than 260 million enrollments, thus driving our potential to have competent scientists, engineers and doctors with the ability to shape our progress. To leverage the benefits of this demographic dividend, we as responsible citizens and parents need to encourage students to learn science effectively in school and college. Fostering the right attitude to scientific thinking right from the early years of education will enable us to nurture our children in science for the future.

**Encourage the habit of research**

As a parent and a teacher, I have found children to be inherently curious; they are always teeming with questions. When we foster their curiosity, children will naturally tend to delve deep into doing research on their own, even for basic topics. Therefore, the learning environments we create for our children must encourage them to not only ask questions but also invest time in finding answers.

Fortunately today, with the increase in internet penetration, children have access to abundant resources. Online education platforms have engaging content that kindles their interest and curiosity. However, providing children access to these resources isn’t enough to motivate them to learn. It’s important for parents to encourage research as a part of children’s daily learning activities. For instance, if your child is asked to work on a project around volcanoes, it’s important to help them understand how to use the right search terms, search engines and assess reliable and unreliable sources. These skills will come in handy later on in their professional space and will encourage them to pursue successful STEM careers.

**Foster practical knowledge**

I have observed that when children get hands-on experience and are able to test their theoretical knowledge through practical applications, they deliver better results. For instance, encouraging children to make a model of an aeroplane at home to learn Bernoulli’s Principle or create a periscope to understand how light travels will enable them to envision their careers as engineers or architects.

Parents can help children observe the science behind their everyday activities. Studies show that by having a strong understanding of concepts, students also acquire critical thinking, problem-solving and analytical skills while creating prototypes. These skills are important in bettering the quality of engineers and architects they would become in the future.

**Awareness of the impact of Science**

An early appreciation of the perennial excitement of scientific discoveries is important for attracting children to pursue scientific careers. Children who understand the impact that science and the scientific community hold in our lives, are more interested to learn the subject. It is crucial for us parents to sensitise our children on how medicines and surgeries save lives or help humankind find cures for deadly diseases. We must also encourage them to interact with doctors or scientists who can educate them on how their contributions to science have made a difference in several lives. All of this can motivate them to study science and contribute to the betterment of the world.