



Philosophy for Children (P4C): Information for Parents and Carers

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What is Philosophy for Children?

Philosophy for Children (P4c) was created by Professor Lipman in the late 1960s, and its aim was to encourage children to be more reasonable, reflective and considerate.

P4c is essentially about developing thinking and reasoning skills, through talking and posing challenging questions.

These questions cover a range of subjects and experiences.

P4c is designed to get everybody thinking...

Not all questions can be answered but all answers can be questioned!

What does a P4C session look like?

Generating a philosophical question:

After learners have had time to respond to the stimulus individually, with a partner class, they then take part in concept activities leading to generating a question. They are encouraged to develop their skills at forming a philosophical question, they learn to understand which type of questions generate a good enquiry.

Closed question: What caused WWII?

Philosophical question: **Can war ever be just?**

Deciding on a line of enquiry

After generating their questions they then have to choose which question they want to discuss. The children vote for the line of enquiry they wish to develop.

Discussion

The children then discuss the question. They listen to each other, share ideas, agree, disagree, build upon each other's ideas and all have the chance to contribute.

Completing the enquiry

After a set period of time the enquiry will be brought to a close and the facilitator (the teacher) will recap on the ideas covered and discussed.



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What does a P4C session look like?

Starting Point

The children usually sit in a circle to aid good listening and equal involvement. They think about the rules and guidelines for a successful enquiry and possibly focus on particular skills needed. Often a session will be spread out over two consecutive lessons to provide appropriate depth and time working on concepts.

1. Recap Ground Rules
2. Presentation of the stimulus
3. Concept activities
4. Question Making
5. Question Airing
6. Question Choosing—Voting
7. First Thoughts (Enquiry)
8. Building (Enquiry)
9. Last Thought (Enquiry)
10. Review



The Stimulus

The children can share a story, look at a picture, a poem, listen to a piece of music, or use any other starting point that will stimulate thoughts and discussion.


Why P4C?

P4C develops the skills, attitudes and dispositions for higher level thinking:

- Ability to work with others
- Builds communication skills
- Raises self esteem
- Develops social responsibility
- Promotes respect and understanding
- Develops reasoning skills
- Promotes logical, critical and reflective thinking

P4c develops different types of thinking:

1. Collaborative—thinking of others

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2. Caring—thinking of others
 3. Critical—making reasoned judgements
 4. Creative—creating new ideas

Benefits for students

- A way to open up learning through enquiry and the exploration of ideas
- Realise that there is not always a right answer and all ideas are valued
- They have the confidence to ask questions and learn through discussion
- All learners (including teachers) have opportunities to genuinely enquire
- A chance to speak and be heard without fear of getting an answer wrong
- Intelligence and respect for others grows
- Gives all participants a voice and chance to flourish
- Gives all children a chance to 'think outside the box' and to celebrate others inspiring ideas
- Raises self-esteem and social responsibility
- Non-verbal students can contribute to the enquiry through written responses and/or evaluate the skills used or needing to be developed by the class

How can you help your child at home?

Take time to listen to them/talk to them about the P4C sessions in class

Be confident that you don't always know the answer—its ok to ponder

Give them opportunities to talk about appropriate 'big issues' e.g. questions from newspapers or TV.

Use open-ended questions:

Why do you think that? How did you decide? What do you think?