



KIDS AND SCIENCE: POINTERS FOR PARENTS

What can parents do to help nurture and maintain their children's interest in science? In the Bayer Facts of Science Education #IV survey, America's Ph.D. scientists offer these tips:



- **Know that interest in science begins early in childhood.** The majority of scientists caught the "science bug" while still in elementary school. And if your four-year-old daughter wants a doctor's kit and your son an erector set, don't be surprised: biological sciences first appealed to female scientists, while physics and chemistry attracted the males.
- **Be aware that girls like science as much as boys.** Mounting evidence indicates that girls and boys typically start out with equal interest in science. Unfortunately, behaviors in the classroom may turn girls off to the subject. When they were in elementary school, the scientists surveyed report that girls were encouraged far less than boys in science class – a situation that grew worse in high school.
- **Understand adult roles.** When it came to igniting their early interest in science, it was scientists' parents who were the biggest influences. And it's not because their parents were professional scientists, but rather because the adults encouraged them to pursue their interests and find answers to questions on their own.
- **Expose children to role models.** Mentors are very important to young professionals just beginning their careers. The same is true for students. Exposing students to male and female professionals helps them see that they can accomplish their goals, too. Companies like Bayer have employee volunteer programs that encourage scientists to spend time with students in schools.
- **Check out school science programs.** National science education reformers advocate science learning at the earliest elementary school levels through an inquiry-based, hands-on method. Students learn by researching, analyzing, experimenting and testing conclusions, just like scientists do. Talk to your children's teachers. To find out the best curricula available, contact the National Science Resources Center in Washington, D.C.
- **Nurture their interests outside of school.** Science is everywhere, not just in the classroom or laboratory. It's in the fish tank, in the backyard where caterpillars turn into butterflies and in the kitchen where baking a cake is a chemistry lesson. Doing informal experiments at home is not only fun, but effective in helping to develop long-term skills and interest.
- **Utilize science resources.** From the media and Internet to science museums and the public library, resources abound. Visiting science museums and zoos had a profound early affect on many scientists. And with the number of outstanding Web sites devoted to scientific discovery and learning, the Internet can play a positive role.

For fun and instructional experiments using regular household products such as coffee filters and marker pens, visit MakingScienceMakeSense.com

For more information, please visit MakingScienceMakeSense.com



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