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# 7 keys to boost your child's curiosity

By Ophélie Ostermann | On November 5, 2014

Formerly seen as a vice, curiosity is now extolled as a virtue. A recent American study shows its importance in the learning and development of children. But how do you awaken? Our seven tips ... pretty amazing.

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Since the second half of the twentieth century and the introduction of active learning in school, curiosity has changed status. Long nearest the seven deadly sins that virtue, the term had a pejorative connotation. Curiosity is often "misplaced" or "a bad thing". In the sixteenth century, Montaigne advocated for his lack of curiosity as the wisdom in *The Essays* (1595), "What is a gentle and soft pillow, and healthy, that ignorance and incuriosity, to rest a well head done!". But when it was valued "investigator-limiting and not" (1).

In fact, since we study its mechanisms, curiosity There are two main archetypes Stéphane Jacob (2), psychologist specializing in learning disabilities in children. Far from being vicious, curious is that which calms his anxiety of the unknown by learning. "It is assumed in this case that is the uncomfortable feeling of being unprepared motivates to learn more in order to reassure. "In short, these acquired knowledge pose a framework and benchmarks. As if one wanted to monitor and control up to not be destabilized.

The second form of curiosity is within the reward, the desire to know more than what we already know. "We already have lots of info on the subject and we glimpse the possibility of access to others who have escaped before. The prospect of completing the article also triggered a strong motivation to learn, "says the psychologist.

## Acquired, innate or a little of both?

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Are we all equal and all face the desire to know more? Not sure. Some have satisfied of what they already know while others are still inclined to dig further. Would there be a breeding ground for the birth? In reality, the answer is not as categorical as indicated Stéphane Jacob, "There probably is some genetics. From an early age, some babies are more open to intense stimulation than others who have more need their familiar landmarks. "



*While it's tempting to overdo, allowed to venture!*  
Tang Ming Tung Photo / Getty Images

But if some leave with luggage required from birth, the psychologist acknowledges that being curious is not the rule. This is not a so-called track "normal" borrows each child during its development. "You become curious by confronting his environment. The experience forged in children the belief that it can try things out for himself. This appetite is related to self-confidence and autonomy," says Stéphane Jacob. Independence paramount to his own experience, which of course depends on the educational setting. If the child is overprotected by parents who prevent explore by itself, it will develop under this facet of a personality. At school, we find this principle in "active learning", applied by the Montessori method. The material in class is up children to maximize its accessibility. It goes where it pleases and directs their learning towards what he wants and can do. Everything applies very young, from the crib. The Pikler-Loczy pedagogy promotes independence: "The environment is secure and fitted that children encounter different opportunities adapted to their age and freely explore," explains the psychologist.

A dose of acquired another innate, but mostly lots of outdoor awakening, which seems essential. During infancy, as we know, the benefits are enormous curiosity. "The important thing is to stimulate curiosity in the first months and then continue," says Geneviève Djenati, clinical psychologist and psychotherapist couples and families (3). A

curious child learns better and better stores. For its part, Stéphane Jacob confirms: "Curiosity is a phenomenon that combines motivation and pleasure. The "exploratory" behavior of the child is only strengthened. "In practice and in kindergarten, curious kids will be interested in everything, asking more questions, and then look for the answers. So more time to lose to sharpen their potential.

## Seven Keys to stimulate the curiosity of her child

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### Answer questions

For all the questions! Even the classic-classic "Why a range called" fork "" ". While it is often easier to argue a "Do not know" at its tenth quick question on the journey from home to school, an answer enabling it to move forward. However, be careful not to go beyond the question. "We must leave open the precision that the adult has in mind. This stimulates curiosity because the child continues to ask questions until it has all the answers. When it remains enigmatic, it continues to be interested in," explains Genevieve Djenati.

### Let him make his own experience

Already baby, the child has a learning thirst that goes through what psychologists call "investigative body", according to her paramount. This is what he does when he catches his foot and in his mouth for example. What could be more appealing than to see something beyond the end of his leg? When he grows up, same scenario. While it is tempting for a mother to overprotect her little one, leave the venture, even if it is wrong and that parents leave him wondering why.

He eats the land between two toboggan runs? Nothing serious, he will soon realize that he had better taste.

### *Banish the language "baby"*

If nothing more touched to hear him attempt to pronounce "helicopters", no need to base the model on the contrary. The aim is to introduce even words and phrases they will not understand! "Children who do not understand all the words will seek to understand its meaning and therefore become curious. In addition, complicated words are those "major," they give their desire to grow, "says psychologist Geneviève Djenati.

### *Being curious parent*

Daniel Pennac, a former teacher and writer, stated: "It does not force a curiosity, it awakens. "Parents are role models, so it is imperative to be oneself curious. Visiting museums, music, forest getaway ... on returning to the game of discovery as if the parent also learned for the first time that there are snails in the garden, it keeps the child awake.

### *Close the door to the parents' room*

Surprising as it may seem, though the reason is simple: "Children understand that there is an area for parents in which they have no access. It stimulates their curiosity, "what there is in there, what's happening?" Says the psychologist. Who has not searched during his childhood in a night table or in a locked drawer double locked? Nothing more exciting! "It is very good sign of searching, insists Geneviève Djenati. Attics, for example, are a gold mine, you have to let the children go poking it. One can of course ask a banned but when it is exceeded, do not make a whole drama. "

### *Heat neurons watching her photo album*

Needless to redouble their efforts to excite his brain of Einstein. Take fifteen minutes with him on the couch and watch a photo album. The goal? He discovered that on some old pictures we were not dressed the same way, a place he knows or has



*With the album, the child sees the old outfits, members of younger family, a landscape that has changed. This is a very good way to arouse his curiosity. Photo Getty Images*

changed since it recognizes the family members when they were younger. Malin!

### *Do not neglect the game*

The game has a double action: it occupies and awakens. "When they are toddlers, the game of" Cuckoo "is very important. The fact that they are hiding their eyes with their hands and they wonder what will appear arouses much interest, "says Geneviève Djenati. Growing up, everything is good to stimulate. It prefers games like blind man's buff, which develops along the touch and hearing and especially the eternal treasure hunt. Search, attention discovery is a must to sharpen this trait.

(1) *Montaigne and nonchalant* Curiosity, Bénédicte Boudou and Nadia Cernogora.

(2) Author *Curiosity, psychology and ethology* (Ed. Mardaga 2002).

(3) Author particular *Wait ... Hurry up. The time of parents, children's time*, (Ed. L'Archipel 2014).

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