

Ho PARENTS!

SO YOUR CHILD IS INTO STEM. What does that mean? It could mean that you have a little one whose constantly exploring the natural world around them or one who bubbles with questions at every opportunity.

Humans have a naturally occurring internal drive to investigate and answer important questions, and fostering an environment that encourages taking on the challenges they will face is vital in seeing them flourish in areas even beyond the scientific realm.

And while the curiosity comes naturally to all of us, the applications of what STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects require...may not.

Even if you aren't STEM-minded yourself, or you feel a little clueless on how to support your child in their scientific endeavors at school or at home, just remember you're not alone—and there are ways you can help your child succeed!

Here's a little secret that should be general

knowledge: Not having the answer is the perfect place to start when it comes to learning STEM. That cluelessness you feel? It's actually an asset.

As your child's parent and role model, the best thing you can do for them is to embrace the fact that you don't know the answer and be willing to say that to your child. There's no shame in not knowing the answer—in fact, that's where we all start when it comes to learning anything new. That's an important message to send because it empowers children by focusing on the fact that they have the ability to learn.

The other important concept to model is that it's always a good idea to double check your knowledge. You can do that by saying, "Even though I think I know the answer, let's check." It's an especially smart strategy since there's a good chance that new evidence, and possibly new understandings, have been discovered since you were in school.

HOW TO FOSTER PRODUCTIVE STEM TALK?

TALKING IS INTEGRAL to human learning, and "STEM Talk" provides a foundation for students to think in ways that can be engaged with, interpreted, built upon, and refined.

Giving your child the beginning of an academic response, or sentence starter, is an effective tool in engaging their STEM mind. Sentence starters help to focus attention on content-specific vocabulary and provide young minds with the language support they need to engage in discussions in more effective ways. Sentence starters help students communicate what they are thinking about, help many students with special needs, and provide focus for the lesson at hand.

If your students can talk about their

