

Parent Success Story

Thinking Skills

This story is from Laura in Sudbury, Ontario.

Supporting Flexible Thinking

A while ago, we were supposed to go to a parade at night and my 7-year-old daughter kept on asking whether it was time to go yet. I suggested several things she could do to pass the time, but she refused all of my suggestions. Although it was frustrating, I calmed myself and stopped giving her suggestions.

I noticed that my daughter started taking cushions off the couch. When I asked her what she was doing, she told me that she was going to vacuum the couch as it needed a cleaning, and vacuuming would help her to pass the time before the parade. She also decided to clean the cat litter box.

Normally, I don't let her do those kind of chores because I have always thought that she is too young, and those are things that I should do. I caught my thoughts about what "I should do" and what "she should do" and tried to think more flexibly about the situation. I decided to let my child do these tasks—after all she wasn't going to hurt herself or anyone else; nothing terrible was going to happen.

I was able to accept that my child didn't want me to make suggestions—she wanted to come up with her own solutions to deal with being bored. She was thinking in a flexible way. And the result was that my child was happier, time passed quicker, and I stayed calm. I also have a different view of what my child is capable of and I am impressed. I am questioning my thinking about her more now and challenging my "shoulds." Flexible thinking helped my daughter and me pass the time constructively and nurtured our relationship, too.