

JANUARY 2021

An exclusive magazine for the residents of Kitsilano

# KITSBEACH

## VANCOUVER



Painter and  
Printmaker  
Ann Thinghuus



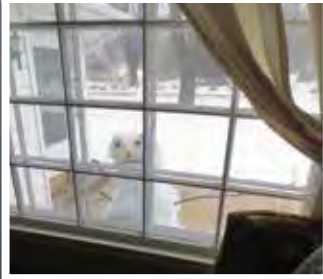
Cover Photo by Wildflower Photography



# Things To Do With Kids On A Cold or Snowy Day

By Tori S. Bevins

- Take all the cushions off the couch and build a fort.
- Pop popcorn on the stove and curl up with a movie.
- Prepare ahead and get more books from the library than normal, read them aloud and then try drawing a character from one of them.
- Make a snowman. Surprise your next guests and build the snowman so it is looking into one of the windows of the house. If it's too cold to go outdoors, find things around the house and create an indoor "snowman" dressed in family members' clothing.
- Turn on some music and have a dance party.
- Pour dry beans into a bin or large disposable container and let kids use their imagination. They can drive cars/trucks through them, sort them, pretend to make you a meal with them, etc.
- Bake cookies or bread together.
- Take on the roles of their favourite characters from a book and "act" like those characters all day. Our house is known for "playing" Little House on the Prairie often.
- Cut open paper grocery bags and tape them together to make a large drawing surface. Draw life sized pictures. Masking tape works well for putting the big pieces of paper you create on a wall.
- Set up a real tent in the house and fill it with books and toys. Give this play place a creative name to make it even more appealing.
- Make hot cocoa on the stove from only milk, cocoa and sugar and tell stories about when your child was a baby.
- Plan an indoor scavenger hunt.



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BVM has numerous neighbourhood-specific publications customized for various communities in and around the Vancouver area and throughout Canada.

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## ASSOCIATION SUBMISSION INFORMATION

Are you on the association board for your subdivision? Contact us for information on how you can submit articles, updates, reminders, events and more to the residents.

We create customized homeowners/ratepayers association sections at no cost to the HOA/RPA or the residents.

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[jsee@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:jsee@bestversionmedia.com).

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| CONTENT DUE: | EDITION DATE: |
|--------------|---------------|
| December 1   | January       |
| January 1    | February      |
| February 1   | March         |
| March 1      | April         |
| April 1      | May           |
| May 1        | June          |
| June 1       | July          |
| July 1       | August        |
| August 1     | September     |
| September 1  | October       |
| October 1    | November      |
| November 1   | December      |

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## HAPPY NEW YEAR

## DEAR KITS

*"What a wonderful thought it is that some of the best days of our lives haven't even happened yet."*

— Anne Frank

The New Year is here and marks our chance for a fresh start. The days may be cold and the nights too long and dark, so make it your mission to get outdoors no matter how chilly the weather may be. Wrap up warm and take a walk in the park. You'll feel so much better if you make the effort.

In fact, make it one of your New Year's resolutions and discover a new you in 2021. Most importantly make all of your resolutions reasonable and realistic. Turn those dreams for better health and wellness and other new beginnings into direct action that helps you achieve success.

Finally I want to thank all of our readers for their continuing support and wish everyone a happy and healthy 2021.

—Jerry See  
Publisher

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To learn more about becoming an expert contributor, contact BVM at [see@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:see@bestversionmedia.com) or 262-422-6139



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# PAINTER AND PRINTMAKER ANN THINGHUUS

By Richard Forzley      Photos by Wildflower Photography

Born in Denmark, Kitsilano resident Ann Thinghuus is a versatile working painter and printmaker whose aesthetic range reflects a cosmopolitan sensibility and a strikingly original worldview. Ann’s abstract expressionist paintings and prints juxtapose and fuse her technical prowess with her pitch perfect use of colour, exploiting the tension between these elements to create a deep emotional response in the viewer. The

result is a collaboration between the artist and the viewer where individual thoughts and perceptions meld as one to create a singular act of art.

Abstract Expressionism is a term applied to a movement in American painting that flourished after World War II, sometimes referred to as the New York School. The work produced by Abstract Expressionists uses

abstraction to convey strong emotional or expressive content and in its large-scale paintings often breaks away from traditional techniques. The dynamic fusion of Surrealism and Abstraction was developed by painters such as Jackson Pollock, Mark Rothko and Willem de Kooning and is characterized by gestural brushstrokes and the impression of spontaneity. The works are usually large scale, edge-to-edge compositions with deep contours created and connected by movement and traces of the brush.

“My work is in the style of ‘Colour Field’ painting, closely related to abstract expressionism. It creates an optical experience of the senses rather than a realistic image, allegory or narrative. Colour and the way it is perceived is key to my work so I eliminate external references and allow it to exist entirely in its relationship to the viewer.”

Colour field is characterized by large areas of flat, solid colour spread across the canvas creating unbroken surfaces and flat picture planes. The movement places less emphasis on gesture, brushstrokes and action in favour of an overall consistency of form and process.

“For me it’s important to make the space you are surrounded by meaningful and pleasant to create positivity. Since my separation, it’s been a struggle to rebuild my art business. I have to thank my clients who support my artwork and allow me to continue a passion that makes me happy. “

Ann holds a Masters in Art Education, a Bachelor of Fine Arts and a Bachelor of Education from UBC, enhanced with further training at Emily Carr Institute of Art + Design/Florence, Italy program, Université Canadienne en France/Laurentian University (Nice, France), Grafisk Gruppe Havarthigaarden (Holte, Denmark), Malaspina Printmakers Society and Dundarave Print Workshop & Gallery in Vancouver, and Metchosin International Summer School of the Arts (Metchosin).



Photo courtesy of Ann Thinghuus

The daughter of a Danish father and a Chinese mother, Ann draws on her culturally diverse heritage to generate a harmonious fusion of textures and styles in her paintings and prints. “I have been working with various printmaking techniques, including etching, woodcut, collagraph, lithograph, silkscreen, and lino for more than 20 years,” she says. “I am currently working with mixed media and collagraphs, a printmaking process in which materials are applied to a rigid base such as paperboard or wood, creating a kind of collage that is inked and applied to paper creating the image.” Her artistic style draws widely on an abstract interplay of color, depth, form and texture.

Continue on to page 6

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RESIDENT FEATURE

Ann has exhibited her work in cities worldwide, receiving national and international exposure for her art. As well as expressing herself through her paintings and prints, she is a respected educator who uses her knowledge and talent to enrich the lives of others.

“I love working with adolescents and have been teaching Art and Photography in Richmond at the senior level for over twenty years. Working with young minds to create vibrant and exciting new projects is intellectually stimulating as well as emotionally satisfying,” she says. The study of art with children helps her regain a sense of innocence and invigorates her way of seeing the world.

“My first art studio was in Kitsilano – that building was torn down and replaced with a new one. Both of my children Elina and Viggo, go to school in the neighbourhood and I volunteer at their school.” Ann believes that it’s important to live in a like-minded neighbourhood where her kids can develop lifelong friendships.

With the onset of Covid-19, the sense of a secure neighbourhood gives her peace of mind. “Having access to the beach and ocean allows the kids and I a natural playground when public playgrounds are closed. Kits also offers a variety of amenities we enjoy, all usually within walking distance. Not having to get into the car and drive is a real asset. Kits has an easy vibe we love and we support our neighbourhood by using many of the facilities available to us, including yoga, cooking classes, guitar lessons, kayaking, paddle boarding and swimming.



Photo courtesy of Ann Thinghuus



Photo courtesy of Ann Thinghuus

“Our travel has been limited by the new world we live in, so we have been enjoying BC and exploring the province, always with Covid safety precautions in mind. When we were able to travel, we would go on an annual trip to Singapore and Denmark to visit family. Hopefully we’ll be able to do that again soon.

“The residents in Kitsilano are very supportive of the arts and have been incredibly responsive to my work. I frequently custom design original paintings for the particular needs of local residents and love collaborating with people to make their home or business environment a warm and welcoming place. This process can give them joy and serenity and affords me a deep sense of solace when a painting satisfies both the client and the artist.”

Ann Thinghuus (annthinghuus.com and @annthinghuus) is represented with collections in Canada, USA, United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy, Germany, Switzerland, Singapore, Malaysia and China.

Do you know a neighbour who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbour to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at [jsee@bestversionmedia.com](mailto:jsee@bestversionmedia.com).

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Imagine a Community Without Frantic Families

By Patrick Lencioni, founder and president, The Table Group

Parents are the CEOs of their families, and families are more important than companies. Yes, I am confident that both of those statements are true. And so, it stands to reason that parents should go about planning and organizing their home life with at least as much strategic clarity as a CEO runs his or her business.



Unfortunately, most of them don’t. I certainly didn’t. And the cost of this is greater than we know, for our families, our children, our marriages, and even our communities.

Fortunately, it doesn’t have to be that way. Imagine you, your family, and your community, being calmer, more intentional and more peaceful. Imagine not having to worry about whether your son makes the travel squad of the underwater lacrosse team, or whether your daughter takes advanced placement astrophysics during her junior year of high school, or whether you should have bought that lake house while interest rates were low like your neighbours did.

Theodore Roosevelt once said that “comparison is the thief of joy,” and it is so easy for parents and families to lose their joy when they are tempted to compare their lives to the people next door, down the street or in the next pew over at church. The key to avoiding this is to get clear—really clear—about who you are and what matters most to you, and then making decisions with confidence, knowing that you’re living true to yourselves regardless of what others are doing. That is the purpose of my book, *The Three Big Questions for a Frantic Family*.

I discovered the model for the book years ago. By day I was, and still am, a consultant to CEOs. By night I’m a husband and father. One evening I came home, and innocuously said to Laura, my

wife: “If my clients ran their companies the way we run this family, they’d go out of business.” Feeling like I was criticizing her, Laura objected, and I reminded her that it was as much my fault as hers. In fact, I was more at fault because I spent my days helping others create clarity and strategy, and I did virtually nothing in that area at home. So I adapted the work I did for corporations for families and came up with *The Three Big Questions*.

What this entails is actually simple. In just an hour over dinner, parents can have a discussion that provides a basic but critical level of family clarity. By asking and discussing a few key questions, they can identify the values that guide the behaviour of the family, the basic principles that create the strategy for the family, and the single greatest priority for the family over the next few months. By carving out just 15 minutes each week, they can review those things and make whatever decisions and adjustments are necessary to keep things smooth and on track. The book provides real-life examples from different kinds of families, from those with young kids to empty-nesters. It’s a fictional story about a husband and wife who discover the model, but the most important thing about the book is this: it really works.

**Additional Assets:**  
[tablegroup.com/download/frantic-family-model/](http://tablegroup.com/download/frantic-family-model/)



**Patrick Lencioni** was named in *Fortune* magazine as one of the “ten new gurus you should know.” His passion for organizations and teams is reflected in his writing, speaking and executive consulting. He is the author of eleven best-selling books.





# JANUARY

**To January 3**  
**Canyon Lights at Capilano Suspension Bridge**  
**@3735 Capilano Road, North Vancouver**  
**Open 2 pm-9 pm**

See the site's usual historical, geological and nature educational displays, beautiful First Nations totem pole art and bridges throughout the trees. There is also the Cliffwalk, the gift shop, places to buy hot chocolate and the world-famous and very wobbly (but perfectly safe) suspension bridge. Capilano Suspension Bridge supports the BC Professional Firefighters Burn Fund. Many areas at Capilano Suspension Bridge are not wheelchair accessible. However, visitors in wheelchairs do receive free admission. Also, if on leash and under control, dogs are permitted at the venue. [capbridge.com](http://capbridge.com)

**To January 3**  
**Fly Like Santa at FlyOver Canada**  
**@201 - 999 Canada Place**  
 Fly like Santa this Christmas on a magical flight across Canada. After meeting some of Santa's elves, Chestnut and Pinecone, you'll join them as they take flight across Canada looking for their fellow elves. You may even get a sneak peek of Santa's Workshop as you soar over the North Pole. [flyovercanada.com](http://flyovercanada.com)

**To January 3**  
**Grouse Mountain Peak of Christmas**  
**@6400 Nancy Greene Way, North Vancouver**  
 All activities are complimentary with a Mountain Admission Ticket, Annual Membership, Winter Season Pass, or Lift Ticket . [grousemountain.com/peak-of-christmas](http://grousemountain.com/peak-of-christmas)

**To January 3**  
**Granville Island Festive Lights**  
**Granville Island**  
**@1661 Duranleau St. 9 am-6 pm**  
 Admission: Free  
 Granville Island Festive Lights includes local shopping, restaurants, lounges, hot drinks and takeout treats. [granvilleisland.com](http://granvilleisland.com)

**To January 3**  
**Towers of Tomorrow with LEGO Bricks Science World**  
**@1455 Quebec Street Thursday to Sunday 10 am-5 pm**  
 Towers of Tomorrow with LEGO® Bricks features 20 of the world's most astonishing skyscrapers from the USA, Australia, Asia, Canada and United Arab Emirates constructed with breathtaking architectural detail and accuracy. Built on a scale of 1:200 and with stunning precision and attention to detail, the LEGO® towers offer visitors a bird's-eye view of these extra-ordinary buildings and are just as impressive in model size. [tourismvancouver.com/listings/science-world/17819/](http://tourismvancouver.com/listings/science-world/17819/)

*The Coronavirus is still a significant health concern in BC. For the most up-to-date information on in-person events in January, go to official individual event websites or check out [tourismvancouver.com](http://tourismvancouver.com) or [vancouverbestplaces.com](http://vancouverbestplaces.com)*



**January 15-31**  
**Dine Out Vancouver Festival**  
**@Various venues**  
 Taste the world. Vancouver style. First day for the festival featuring special deals at hundreds of local restaurants. Menus will still be a fixed price, but restaurants can offer a menu that falls within a \$10 range, allowing more flexibility for restaurants.

The idea of a fixed-price menu deal is to get Vancouverites out and into restaurants during a normally slow time of the year. The Festival is Canada's largest and brings together hundreds of chefs, more than 300 restaurants, wineries and craft breweries for food-forward events and experiences designed to give culinary enthusiasts the opportunity to taste the best flavours of the city. [dineoutvancouver.com/about/dine-out/](http://dineoutvancouver.com/about/dine-out/)

**To January 24**  
**Resurgence: Indigeneer Identities**  
**Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art**  
**@639 Hornby Street 11 am-5 pm**  
 The new exhibition celebrates the deeply personal and profound work of four emerging 2Spirit artists – and their unique identities and stories as queer Indigenous people. Artists include Levi Nelson (Lil'wat First Nation), Jaz Whitford (Secwepemc), Morgan Whitehead (Plains Cree) and Raven John (Coast Salish/Sto:lo). [billreidgallery.ca](http://billreidgallery.ca)

**To April 11**  
**To Speak With A Golden Voice**  
**@Bill Reid Gallery of Northwest Coast Art**  
**639 Hornby Street**  
 This exhibition celebrates the centennial birthday of Bill Reid (1920–1998) and includes rarely seen treasures by Reid and works from artists such as Robert Davidson and Beau Dick, providing new insights into the nuanced facets and creative complexities of Reid's life and legacy. [billreidgallery.ca](http://billreidgallery.ca)

**Given the uncertainty of the moment, we've included a list of many free opportunities for online entertainment and education to keep you and your family engaged.**

**Maintain a Healthy and Creative Life at Home and in Your Neighbourhood**

Moving is an important part of resolving the body's stress cycles, and a key to physical and mental wellbeing. Get creative with what you have on hand.

- Keep moving while listening to a podcast or your favourite music or while talking on the phone.
- Repurpose what you have at home. For example, water bottles or canned soup cans may double as hand weights.
- For resistance exercises, put soup cans in a backpack and do squats.
- Don't get lost binge watching television. Set a 30-minute timer to remind you to get up and stretch and move for a few minutes.
- Taking a few deep breaths is good preventative medicine.
- Take advantage of the many online resources listed below.
- And most importantly get some fresh air whenever possible.

**Try the Great Outdoors**

Parks, beaches, and public gardens are open for walks, hikes, skiing and snowboarding. Visit/participate only if you're not sick, during less busy times, and try to maintain social distancing by keeping two metres away from other people.

**Free Online Fitness Classes**

Go to the YWCA's Facebook page at [facebook.com/YWCAHF](https://facebook.com/YWCAHF) or the YMCA's website for online exercise at [gv.ymca.ca/health-fitness](http://gv.ymca.ca/health-fitness)

Check out West Point Grey Community Centre at [westpointgrey.org/events-listing](http://westpointgrey.org/events-listing) for Online Collaborative Creative Dance for Older Adults led by Desirée Dunbar, Fridays from 12:30–2 pm. Click on Zoom Meetings link or download the free Zoom Meetings app.

More workout options at [narcity.com](http://narcity.com) and [sbnation.com](http://sbnation.com)

**Free Concerts, Films and Music Options**

Watch Vancouver Symphony Orchestra concerts on demand with the new VSO@Home series or go to [vancouversymphony.ca/vso-digital-performances](http://vancouversymphony.ca/vso-digital-performances) Stream films curated by the Vancouver International Film Festival at [viff.org/Online](http://viff.org/Online)

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**Tech Time**

CBC is offering a wide variety of games to keep your kids entertained at [cbc.ca/kidscbc2/games](http://cbc.ca/kidscbc2/games).

At [commonsensemedia.org](http://commonsensemedia.org) get ratings of TV shows, movies and video games according to age appropriateness to help parents figure out what their kids should be watching.

Discover almost 50,000 objects in the Museum of Anthropology's collection at [collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/home](http://collection-online.moa.ubc.ca/home)

**More educational websites with learning and reading opportunities for kids**

Check out [adaptedmind.com](http://adaptedmind.com) for math and reading and [globalstorybooks.net](http://globalstorybooks.net) for free multilingual literacy resources.

**And still more**

**StrongStart online**

This Vancouver School Board program for children ages 0–5 and their parents/ caregivers emphasizes learning through play, language and positive social interactions. [vsb.bc.ca/Student\\_Learning/y-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/StrongStart-Online.aspx](http://vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/y-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/StrongStart-Online.aspx) Story Time videos

**Videos of StrongStart**

facilitators reading dozens of delightful stories for ages 0–5 are available for free on the VSB website. [vsb.bc.ca/Student\\_Learning/Early-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/Story-Time-Videos.aspx](http://vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Early-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/Story-Time-Videos.aspx)

**Circle Time videos**

Watch and follow along as teachers read stories suitable for youngsters. [vsb.bc.ca/Student\\_Learning/Early-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/Circle-Time-Videos.aspx](http://vsb.bc.ca/Student_Learning/Early-Learners/StrongStart/Pages/Circle-Time-Videos.aspx)

**Family resources for learning at home**

A well curated list of cool online educational materials for families to enhance children's learning, as well as their mental and emotional wellbeing, at home. [kitshouse.org/2020/04/01/family-resources-for-learning-at-home/](http://kitshouse.org/2020/04/01/family-resources-for-learning-at-home/)







# CREATE A CHARCUTERIE BOARD IN 4 EASY STEPS

By Pete Roggeman

Creating and arranging a charcuterie board involves a bit of creativity, but if you follow some simple guidelines, you can't go wrong. By combining a variety of flavours and ingredients in a thoughtful way, you'll find yourself with a centerpiece that is as nice to look at as it is delicious.

For a visually stunning and delicious charcuterie board, mix and match as many of the following categories as you like. A general rule for an appetizer board is 2–3 ounces of meat and cheese per person. Don't hesitate to ask for help picking meats and cheeses at your deli counter.

## INGREDIENTS:

- A variety of hard and soft cheeses (2 or more of each is ideal)
- Nuts - (one or more of walnuts, almonds, cashews, and pistachios)
- Fruit - (berries, grapes, dried apricots and fresh figs if you can get them)
- Crackers & sliced baguette (more than one type and flavour of cracker is best)
- Meats – try to provide 2-3 different meats or cured sausages with varied spice and flavour
- Olives and other pickled vegetables to add a sour contrast
- Hummus, honey, jams, dijon mustard, olive tapenade

## DIRECTIONS

- Set out your ingredients at least 30 minutes before serving, so that your cheeses will reach room temperature, which allows their flavour and texture to be at their best. Leave small napkins in a neat pile near your board.
- 1) Arrange your board - the bigger the better so you have room to place your ingredients or use a few boards and arrange them together. Start by placing your bowls or ramekins on the board. Plan to use them for nuts, olives, fruits, and dips. Space them out so they can be reached from more than one side.
- 2) Add cheese and place crackers and a few small knives and spoons (for honey, jam, or paste) nearby.
- 3) Add meat and cured sausages in tidy stacks or rolled up.
- 4) Add fruits and fill in remaining gaps with nuts or berries.



# WHAT DO SELLERS GOING THROUGH A DIVORCE NEED TO KNOW?



By Hani Faraj and Fred Trudeau

Today, I'll cover the seven things that you need to know before selling your home due to a divorce. But, before you start the proceedings or rush into any decisions you'll later regret, please ensure that you've exhausted all the options of coming together with your partner. If you have gone through all the options and still can't find a way to make it work, here are a few tips that could help you save thousands of dollars:

- Ensure that the other party is on board. This isn't necessarily fun, but if both parties know that they're going to be amicable with each other, they'll usually end up with more money.
- Iron out how much each party will get from the sale. This usually requires dealing with a lawyer, so contact an attorney for legal advice on this matter.
- Work with an agent who is experienced with divorce. Some agents make it seem as though they're the ones going through a divorce, but that's not the right approach. Your agent should know how to deal with highly emotional situations.

- Keep your emotions in check. Keep in mind that the divorce has to happen; focus on the sale, not on getting back at your spouse.
- Don't give visitors to your home any indication of your divorce. Play your cards close to your chest; you don't want to give people an inch such that they know why you're selling.
- Talk to a mortgage broker. Many people neglect this step, and they eventually

have to rush to buy something after the sale is completed.

- Focus on the positives. This is a tough time in your life, but it doesn't need to be stressful. Keep in mind what will happen in the next chapter of your life.

If you have any questions about this or other real estate topics, don't hesitate to reach out to me. I'd love to hear from you.

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# Raising the Roof ON YOUR BASEMENT IS A GOOD IDEA

By Doug Kerr

In Vancouver, homes built back in the early part of the last century weren't always made with a full basement. Many were just meant for storage and holding the furnace and water heater.

Unfortunately, if you have one of these homes, such basements are a waste of potential living space for you and your family.

But there is good news. You can turn your half-basement into a full one quite easily. Although it is a significant financial commitment, such a renovation will add to your home's property value while giving you valuable living space right now.

A basement extension is done by digging out the current basement to a new depth and then extending the foundation

walls downwards to support the home on new footings. The great thing about this type of renovation is that you don't have to leave your home while the work is being done. All of it can be performed while you live comfortably on the upper floors without any disruption to your daily routines.

As well, the exterior of your home doesn't have to be touched. The new perimeter drainage for the house can be done on the inside. There is no need to dig up the exterior landscaping and destroy your flower beds or shrubs.

Once the renovation is done, you miraculously have a whole new floor of prime living space that easily lets you extend your lifestyle.

Such a renovation is not just for those houses with low walled basements. If you live in an area with height restrictions on your home, deepening your basement provides an avenue for expansion. If you can't go up, your option is to go down. The technical name of this process of adding new lower walls to your home's foundation is called "underpinning."

You should know that underpinning is not just for increasing basement wall height but also for foundation repairs. Some early-built homes in Vancouver do not have proper footings and can result in some sinking or shifting.

Underpinning techniques fix this by lowering a house's foundation walls and creating new solid footings underneath, so the house has a stable base. Underpinning is also used when foundation walls have developed cracks or when the concrete walls are found to be crumbling away.

This is valuable information for a homeowner to have should you need it.





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# ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

By Dr. Patricia Porter

You wouldn't build a house on a bad foundation. Let's make sure children have got a good foundation of the learning skills. Physical learning skills, emotional skills and school learning skills are all incredibly important, and you may have discovered that your child needs help with developing some of them. Here are some general ways to help your child develop these skills.

The right questions really help children develop learning skills and they also help them develop their language skills, both very important skills to a child's development. The questions can also help develop self-confidence and help increase the relationship you have with your child.

I'm going to give you some specific questions that you can use. You might want to print them out and pin them up somewhere so that you're reminded of the kind of questions that you can use to help your children develop a whole range of basic learning skills.

Questions are important but they need to be the right ones. When used well they're the best way to develop your child's

thinking, language and self-confidence skills and self-esteem.

There are two types of questions – closed questions and open questions.

Closed questions can be answered in one word.

- Do you want to go out? Yes.
- Have you done your homework? No.
- Are you going to do your homework? Yes.
- Are you still playing video games? Yes.

You are asking questions to get specific information and your child is giving you the information that you've asked for with a yes or no answer. It's just one word. The child isn't thinking. He's just telling you the answer to your question, there is no thought necessary. And there is no language necessary other than yes or no.

You have to use closed question occasionally. But understand that closed questions do not develop your child's thinking skills.

The kind of questions that develop your child's thinking and learning skills are open

questions that need to be answered in sentences. These are questions that your child must think about before answering. He cannot just come up with one word. He has to be responsible for the answer to these questions.

There are three kinds of open questions.

- Questions to use in a general way when you're talking to your children during the day or when you're outside. Questions you can use all the time.
- Specific questions that develop thinking in your child.
- Learning questions that are going to help your child take responsibility for homework and think about the homework they are doing.
- When you ask questions, there is a specific process that you need to go through to make sure that the questioning is effective by remembering that wonderful game '20 questions', how to play it and what it actually teaches your child.

Again, asking questions is good if you ask them in the right way.

## How to ask questions

### 1. Do not use sarcasm

You are asking questions for information only. You're not asking questions as a way of making your child feel bad. You're asking questions as a way of helping your child think, as a way of helping their brain work.

### 2. Get your child's attention first

Don't ask your child a question as he is walking out the door. He's not going to answer you. It's going to be a waste of a question and it can cause friction between the two of you. Before you ask a question make sure you've got your child's attention.

### 3. Don't ask questions randomly

Choose the type of question you want to use. Use closed questions when you want a quick and easy answer. Ask open questions when you want to help your child think.

### 4. Allow thinking time

Do not assume that when you ask an open question that your child is going to answer it immediately. He or she is thinking. Wait for an answer. I have been known to ask a question for a child and to wait for up to 20 seconds before the child begins to answer. Twenty seconds is a long time because it was obvious that the child was thinking. His brain was working, but he just hadn't got the words he needed to give me the answer yet.

### 5. Provide possible answers

Sometimes children cannot answer because they do not have the words they need. When this happens try giving your child several possible answers. For instance, if your child can't tell you why she is upset you could suggest that someone might have hit her, or that she had lost something, or her friend had been mean, or she was scared of doing something.

Use your imagination. Then your child can either choose one of the answers or provide her own. I find this an excellent way of helping children get through the agony of being asked a question as you are giving them time to think and an idea of the kind of answer you are looking for.

### 6. Listen

Make sure you listen to your child's answers with an open mind. Don't correct your child or interrupt until he has finished speaking. Listen carefully to what he says.

### 7. Use follow up questions carefully

If you didn't understand your child's answer, use follow-up questions to get more clarity. You can use follow up questions to get more information from your child. Remember that all the time you're asking questions, you're getting your child's brain working.

## Want some fun asking questions? Play 'Twenty Questions'

Your child thinks of something – anything at all – and you have twenty questions to guess what it is. The child can only answer yes or no. I have used this game with very young children and they love it. They soon come up with the strategy of asking general questions first – "Is it inside?" – then moving onto more detailed questions – "Is it in the kitchen?"

You can play it in the car, you can play it with adults, you can play it after a couple of glasses of wine, you can play it with children of any age. And it needs absolutely nothing other than the ability to think!

*Dr. Patricia Porter has more than 35 years of experience as a classroom teacher and ten years as a researcher. She has worked with hundreds of parents with concerns about education and how best to achieve school success.*



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