



3 Ways Fred Rogers Helped Kids Be Curious

(that you can try, too)

Wonder Aloud

Curiosity can be caught. *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood* introduced kids to diverse TV neighbors who were deeply passionate about varied crafts and occupations: There was Yo-Yo Ma loving the cello; Wynton Marsalis loving the trumpet; Bill Nye loving science; Julia Child loving recipes; LeVar Burton loving books.

"The best teacher in the world is the one who loves what he or she does, and just loves it in front of you," said Fred Rogers.

Make sure kids see you indulging your own interests and curiosities. What makes you curious? What do you love to do, and why?

Combine Familiarity and Mystery

Kids need both a sense of safety and a sense of adventure to confidently explore. During the *Neighborhood's* multi-decade run, every single episode adhered to the same basic format. Rogers knew that having a routine kids could count on would cultivate the sense of caring and warmth they needed in order to feel safe as they explored mysteries large and small with him each week.

Start with safety and warmth, then indulge in mysteries. Pique kids' curiosities through the arts and the things they're interested in.

Take Your Time

Kids ask a lot of questions, but adults don't always take the time to respond in ways that encourage their curiosity. In the *Neighborhood*, Rogers spends ample time telling viewers how many questions he has and how much he wants to know about the world.

As Rogers put it, "By responding thoughtfully to children's questions . . . you're encouraging their curiosity. Even when you don't know the answer, you're letting them know it's good to wonder and ask."

Be patient and encourage kids to examine things on their own terms. Answer questions thoughtfully, and focus on the process of discovery.

