

For children too there is no greater instrument of education than the conversation they hear at home. It is unjust to them when nothing is spoken before them but the trifles of dress, the gossip of the neighbourhood, the cares of the household which press too heavily upon the parents, the follies and vanities of the world, which are hardly apprehended by their innocent minds. They are naturally imitative, and a great part of their character is derived from their parents. If there is no life or mirth in a house, the children of the house will be commonly dull and stupid; and if they never hear subjects rationally discussed, they will not learn to think or reason; if the world in which we live is allowed to pass unheeded by, they will be without interests, listless, and unobservant. This home education which they acquire insensibly is as important as the more formal work of the school, and it is as much our duty to provide food for their minds as for their bodies. They do not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth.

Read the above passage, and answer the following questions in your own words

1. What sort of conversation does the author think bad for children?
2. Why does the author think that children may become dull and stupid?

3. What conversation helps children to think and reason?
4. What should parents do to prevent children becoming "without interests, listless, and unobservant"?
5. What is the difference between the education children get at home and the education they get at school?

1- The author thinks conversation on the following subjects to be bad for children: unimportant details relating to dress; gossip of the neighbourhood; household worries; and the foolish and vain actions of the world, which children can hardly understand.

2- Children tend by nature to imitate their elders. The character of children is, therefore, largely formed by that of their parents. Children will become dull and stupid if the parents lead a life devoid of activity, merry-making.

3- Children are helped to think and reason by conversation in which various subjects are discussed intelligently.

4- Parents should not show indifference to what is happening around them. They should feel interested in day to day developments and discuss these in a rational manner in the presence of children.

5- The education which the children get at school is formal. At school they acquire knowledge in accordance with a set programme. But at home children learn things without making any effort to learn them. They acquire knowledge unconsciously and informally.