

CAUSE/EFFECT

Children often ask "Why?" questions. Why is the sky blue? Why does a ball bounce? Why do I have to go to sleep now? All "why" questions question the cause of something. A cause is something that makes something else happen. If you hit a glass of milk with your elbow and it spills, your hitting the glass was the cause of the milk spilling. The spilled milk is called the effect. Every minute of the day is filled with cause and effect situations.

Here is an introductory lesson!

The teacher says, "Today we are going to talk about why something might happen. Let's read this nursery rhyme together.

"Hickory dickory dock
The mouse ran up the clock
The clock struck one
The mouse ran down
Hickory dickory dock."

Now the teacher asks the children: "What do you suppose might have caused the mouse to run up the clock? Nobody really knows the answer and we can't ask the mouse, so let's make predictions. Why did the mouse run UP the clock? Let's try to think of many, varied ideas, I will write them on this chart."

Possible causes might include:

There was cheese at the top
A cat was chasing the mouse.
The mouse heard footsteps and became afraid.
The mouse was looking for a new home.
It was cold on the floor and the mouse thought it would be warmer on top.

Then, if the teacher were to ask the children: "What happened to the mouse *because* he ran up and down the clock?" a list of possible effects could be created.

Possible effects might include:

(Let's say there was cheese at the top.) The mouse felt so comfortable after eating it that he took a long and relaxing nap.

(Let's say a cat was chasing the mouse.) The cat caught the mouse and ate him for dinner.

(Let's say the mouse heard footsteps and became afraid.) The mouse became so nervous he fainted.