



Answering Tough Questions

Now that you've got an idea of what your first volunteering experience will look like, we want to share some tips for answering questions the kids might ask you. Young kids are uninhibitedly curious, and they don't have the same sense of self-consciousness as adults. So when they encounter something new, like a new language, they might ask questions that make you feel a little uncomfortable. It's good to think about these questions ahead of time so you can feel confident answering them in the moment.

“Can you read in the normal language?”

This question is probably going to come up at some point. **For some, this program is the first time they're hearing a language other than English.** A good first step is to acknowledge: “This is really different from when you read books at home or in school, isn't it?” You can even relate it to your own experiences: “When I was learning English/Spanish for the first time, I thought it was really hard too.” Then you can explain why it's important to learn about other languages. “Today we're reading in Spanish. Even though we don't understand all the words, we're learning that stories come in lots of different languages.”

“Hey, did you know that my sister...”

Even if you are the most engaging children's book reader in the world, chances are you're going to get some off-topic comments. You might need to remind your students to use their listening ears and focus back on the book. “Wow! That's really exciting! But right now, we only have a short amount of time to read this story. Do you think we could focus really well and try to finish this book before lunch is over?”

What if someone asks a question you don't know the answer to?

It's ok to admit you don't know! Let them know that you'll do your homework **and follow through next time** when you meet with the kids. They'll appreciate that you remembered and took the time to help them learn. If you encounter a new question that you're not sure how to answer, reach out to our student coordinators and let us know how we can help support you.