



DebateFest Parent Guide

Helping Your Child Think, Speak, and Grow at Home

All Drafts are subject to modification as we work to improve for students

WHY THIS MATTERS

DebateFest is not about arguing—it's about teaching students how to:

- Think critically
- Communicate clearly
- Listen respectfully
- Handle disagreements calmly

You can reinforce these skills at home with simple, daily conversations.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

- Use 1–2 questions per day
 - Keep discussions short (5–15 minutes)
 - Focus on listening—not winning
 - Encourage your child to explain their thinking
-

WEEK 1: BUILDING RESPECTFUL COMMUNICATION

Conversation Starters

- What does it mean to disagree respectfully?
- Have you ever had an argument that got out of control? What happened?

At- Home Activity

“Agree or Disagree” Game

- Make a statement: “Kids should have homework.”
- Ask your child: Agree or disagree?
- Follow up: “Why?”

Parent Tip

Encourage sentence stems:

- “I agree because...”
 - “I disagree because...”
-

WEEK 2: THINKING WITH EVIDENCE

Conversation Starters

- How do you know something is true?
- Why is evidence important?

At- Home Activity

“Prove It!”

- Your child makes a claim
- You respond: “What evidence do you have?”

Parent Tip

Push beyond opinions—ask:

- “What makes you say that?”
-

WEEK 3: HANDLING DISAGREEMENT

Conversation Starters

- Is it okay to disagree with someone? Why?
- What’s the difference between arguing and discussing?

At- Home Activity

“Switch Sides”

- Ask your child to argue the opposite of their opinion

Parent Tip

Teach calm responses:

- “I see your point, but...”
-

WEEK 4: SPEAKING WITH CONFIDENCE

Conversation Starters

- What makes someone a good speaker?
- What makes you nervous about speaking?

At- Home Activity

“1-Minute Talk”

- Your child speaks for 1 minute on any topic

Parent Tip

Focus on effort, not perfection

÷ WEEK 5: EXPLAINING THINKING (MATH & LOGIC)

Conversation Starters

- How did you figure that out?
- Can you explain your answer step-by-step?

At- Home Activity

“Teach Me”

- Your child teaches you how to solve a problem

Parent Tip

Always ask:

- “Why does that make sense?”

🏆 WEEK 6: PREPARING FOR SUCCESS

Conversation Starters

- What are you most proud of?
- What do you want to improve?

At- Home Activity

“Family Debate Night”

- Pick a fun topic:
 - Should kids choose dinner?
 - Should weekends be longer?

Parent Tip

Celebrate growth and confidence

QUICK DAILY QUESTIONS YOU CAN ALWAYS USE

- Why do you think that?
 - What evidence supports your idea?
 - What might someone else say?
 - Can you explain that differently?
-

WHAT TO AVOID

- Don't shut down opinions
- Don't focus on being right
- Don't turn discussions into arguments


WHAT YOU'LL SEE IN YOUR CHILD

With consistent practice, your child will:

- Speak more confidently
- Explain their thinking clearly
- Handle disagreements calmly
- Participate more in school

FINAL MESSAGE FOR PARENTS

You don't need to be an expert. Just ask questions, listen, and encourage your child to think.

 DebateFest isn't just a program—it's a way to build lifelong thinkers and communicators.