



Sample Child–Parent Questions and Answers



Something Happened to Our Planet: Kids Tackle the Climate Crisis is the fourth book in the bestselling and groundbreaking series, following [*Something Happened in Our Town: A Child's Story About Racial Injustice*](#), [*Something Happened in Our Park: Standing Together After Gun Violence*](#), [*Something Happened to My Dad: A Story About Immigration and Family Separation*](#), and [*Algo Le Pasó a Mi Papá: Una Historia Sobre Inmigración y la Separación Familiar*](#).

This new book provides an extensive Reader's Note with an explanation of the climate crisis, tips for talking with children about the climate crisis, a glossary, sample child-parent questions and answers, and a discussion about responding to the climate crisis. Here are a few of the sample child-parent questions and answers.

Q. What is so bad about the temperatures getting a few degrees warmer?

A. Two to three degrees Fahrenheit of warming is not a big deal when it comes to weather, but it is a huge change in climate, because the word “climate” is used to describe the weather everywhere on Earth over a long period of time. An increase in the earth’s climate of 2 to 3 degrees means that some parts of the world would warm up by more than that. Some parts of the world (e.g., the Arctic) have already warmed up by 5 degrees. Even small changes in climate have big consequences. You’ve heard of the Ice Age? The earth’s climate back then was only 11 degrees Fahrenheit cooler than it is now. A temperature rise of just one or two degrees is also a big deal when it comes to your body: remember how bad you feel when you have a fever? That is a signal that your body needs help.

Q. How can the earth be warming up if it’s cold outside?

A. I can see why you are confused; many people think of warmer weather when they think of climate change. But weather and climate are two different things: “weather” describes the way the air feels when you step outside—windy, cold, hot, rainy—and that changes day by day depending on where you are. The word “climate” describes the weather conditions everywhere on the planet over a long period, usually 30 years. Over the past 30 years, the temperatures in most of the places in the world (including the oceans) are hotter than they were before. Winters aren’t as cold as they used to be, and summers are much hotter.

Q. I'm scared about climate change! I don't want the Earth to burn up! It makes me sad to think about it.

A. It's understandable that you're feeling scared and sad about Earth's climate crisis. But we can't let our feelings prevent us from taking action. Humans are good problem-solvers, and we have already made technology to give us energy from clean, renewable sources, like wind and sun. There is still time to make changes to slow down global warming and prevent wildfires, drought, heat waves, and flooding. Everyone can take action—even kids! But we must first admit that there is a problem and commit to finding and implementing solutions.

Q. Will climate change affect us? Will it affect all people?

A. Climate change is bad for all people on the planet. However, some people will suffer earlier or more than others, and that's not fair. For example, hotter temperatures will be hard on people who work outside or can't afford to move away from areas with wildfire smoke or flooding. Rich people can spend more money than poor people to protect themselves from the worst effects of climate change. Since the wealthiest countries produce the most greenhouse gases, many people think that the richer countries should help the poorer countries, those that have done the least to cause climate change.

Some of the other questions covered in the Reader's Note include:

- How does global warming cause the sea to rise?
- Why is it important to save forests?
- How are animals hurt by climate change?
- Why isn't recycling enough? I thought it was good to recycle.
- I feel bad that I used and threw away a plastic straw and bag today. Am I making the planet warmer?
- Do we have to give up all things made from plastic? Most of the stuff I like—or need—is made from plastic.
- Leaders and scientists have known about climate change for a long time. Why haven't adults done what it takes to prevent the planet from heating up?