



A parenting  
tool to...

**INGs:**

Discover and dig  
deeper into what your  
kid enjoys doING



**UNBOXED**

PREPARED  
PARENTS

# What does your kid like doING? Help them find their INGs.



## What is an ING?

An ING is something your kid likes doING. INGs help your kid find and explore new interests and could even lead to pursuing those interests more seriously—but not always! Sometimes, your kid might discover a potential interest and after a bit of exploration realize there isn't really a strong interest there after all. Figuring out what we like is a trial-and-error process, and that's alright.

Some examples of INGs include: collaborating, solving problems, working hands-on, caring for others, being outside, and writing.

## Why are INGs important?

When a kid focuses on their INGs, they're not focused on the arbitrary tasks of figuring out what career they want or what they want to major in. Instead, they're focused on figuring out all of the little interests that are unique to them that ultimately add up to who they are and what they cares about. When a kid is forced to become an expert in a specific activity too early, we limit their exposure to other options. Focusing on INGs, though, can lead them to truly understand the type of work that will be purposeful and meaningful to them, because they enjoy doING it.

# How to help your kid discover an ING

tip



## Discover an ING

what does your kid enjoy doING?

collaborating

solving problems

working hands-on

caring for others

being outside

writing

#WEGOTTHIS

## How do I help my kid discover their INGs?

There is a lot of unrealistic pressure on parents to help their kid find their passions young. If they're not in baseball or ballet by three, what's the point, right? Wrong. Most three, ten, and even sixteen year olds don't yet know their passions. As a parent, you can help your kid discover their INGs by looking at it as a process of discovery.

Instead of asking "What do you want to be?" or "What is your favorite subject?" engage them in the moments when they are excited or energized about a particular activity. That is where you'll find their INGs. Here's what to do:

1. **Make an observation and see if they agree:** "You seemed really excited about \_\_\_\_\_. Tell me about it and what went well for you."
2. **Make further observations about what they might like:** "So it sounds like you enjoyed \_\_\_\_ing, is that true?"
3. **Ask questions about those observations:** "What did you like most about \_\_\_\_ing?" "I just heard you say you like \_\_\_\_ing, is it because you like [another ING]?" "Is there anything you don't like? Understanding the INGs we don't like is as important as understanding the ones we do."

Encourage your kid to keep a journal, white board, or list of the INGs they like. They can add to it when a new ING is discovered. Your kid can also kickstart their INGs discovery process by working through the "Know your INGs" activity on the next page. Work through it with your kid, or discuss their answers with them afterwards to dig deeper into what they enjoy doing and how they could explore those INGs.

# Know your **INGs** activity

Use this worksheet to understand your ING's and what you like about them.

**1. ING's are the things you like doing, like solving problems, writing, or being outside. Your turn! What are your ING's? Make a word cloud of things you like doing.**

**2. Circle your top three ING's above. What do you like doing most about each?**

---

---

---

---

**3. What are some ways you might explore these ING's further? (For example, you could follow your curiosity or create a real-world learning project.)**

---



tip

## Dig deep with INGs

how can your kid explore what they love doing?

- 1 make time for activities related to their INGs
- 2 take time to keep learning

#WEGOTTHIS

# How do we dig deeper with INGs?

## We have a list of INGs. Now what?

Use [Expose, Explore, Pursue](#) to dig deeper into your kid's INGs. The idea is to *Expose* your kid to new opportunities; *Explore* the interests that really spark energy; then *Pursue* those very special INGs that truly bring light into your kid's life.

Let's say your kid is on the dance team, enjoys drawing, and is the secretary of her student government. Some of her INGs across activities might include: creating, collaborating on a team, and organizing information and ideas. *Expose* her to new opportunities where those INGs may be put into action. If anything sparks interest, *Explore* it deeper. Every once in a while, something will really click, and that's when your kid could consider to *Pursue* an interest more deeply, through a project, elective class, extracurricular, or internship. Note that not every exploration will turn into a pursuit—your kid may explore many interests but only pursue a few.

INGs are what allow a kid to explore their interests. When they explore, they understand what they like to do and why they like doing those things.

## What can I do as a parent to help my kid dig deeper with INGs?

While it may be tempting to schedule your kid for one activity or another to figure out what they like, *downtime* is often where kids find their INGs. **Keep their schedule open**, so they have time to explore interests that arise. Then, as they explore, **take time to reflect** about each new activity, your kid's interest level, and what's fueling their interest (or lack thereof) in the activity.