



Be curious about the world around you

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Sometimes as adults, we can be too eager to give young people the benefit of our hard-won experience.

But as children return to school this month, we should make sure we're not only teaching them facts but also encouraging their problem-solving skills and their curiosity.

Two of this month's *Community Connections* stories touch on this. The math teachers at the Laboratory's [Math and Science Academy](#) saw how important it is to help their students understand how math works, not just how to get the right answer. As one teacher put it: "not just teaching the algorithm, but the thinking behind the algorithm."

Secondly, scientist John Singleton enjoyed watching young children playing with magnets at the recent [ScienceFest](#) event. He was reminded of a quote from Albert Einstein: "The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing."

So much of our Northern New Mexico culture is built around ties to the land and the natural world. For generations, our children have splashed in streams where insects hatch and fish feed, and watched the cottonwoods turn from green to gold and back again.

Being curious about how things work is crucial in the science and math work we do at the Laboratory, but it's also an attribute we encourage through many of the programs across the region we engage in with our partners. A skilled workforce that is comfortable problem solving and asking good questions is a benefit to the whole region, so let's keep encouraging our children's curiosity!

—Kathy Keith

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