

Frequently Asked Questions

I am not an inventor. What can I say about the child's invention?

You can ask questions. You can get other students to respond to it and discuss the inventor's work. If possible, have another student try out the invention and see how well it works.

What if I don't understand the technical information presented?

The student has had to describe the invention before attending the CAIC and should be able to explain it. Ask questions for your benefit and that of the other group members. Ask the other students to explain it in their words to confirm their understanding.

How much attention should I give to the display compared to the invention itself?

The display should help to clarify the invention and describe how the invention works and the problem it solves. Although many of our inventors use computers, photographs and other media to prepare their backboards, you should look for evidence of understanding and effort from the child.

What do I do with a child who is very shy or nervous?

Like many of us, some children are uncomfortable addressing a group. If this is the case, rather than having the inventor make a presentation, simply follow a question-and-answer format, which should be easier. Remember, your demeanor can help tremendously. If you approach the judging circle with enthusiasm, humor, and a casual style, this will help the students loosen up.

What about the inventor who has a poor model but a great idea?

Find out how much the child really worked on the invention. Did the student not have access to material that would have made a better invention? Did an initial invention take a lot of time, leaving less time for a second attempt? Did the invention or model break and was there an attempt to reconstruct it?

Suppose the invention does not work that day?

Assume that it had previously worked. This will be highly stressful for the child. You can ask him/her to explain as much as possible without the actual operation. Explain to the child that you understand the idea and that sometimes things just don't work out.

How much help are parents allowed to give children with their inventions?

Parents may support their child's effort by assisting them with dangerous tools, gathering materials, or supplying information. The creative work and design should come from the child.