

# Questions

Philosophy For Young People Vol. 1, No. 1, Spring 2001

## Welcome to *Questions*

Philosophy, the “love of wisdom,” begins, as Plato and Aristotle both noted, with wonder about the world. We express this wonder by asking questions. The philosopher Abraham Heschel suggested that philosophy is the “art of asking the right questions.” It is those unsettled, speculative questions of human existence, and young people’s interest in them, that led to the formation of this journal.

*Questions* began as a project of the American Philosophical Association’s Committee on Pre-College Instruction in Philosophy. We were interested in furthering on a national scale the work that is being done to bring philosophy into young people’s lives, and we wanted to draw attention to the value of philosophy and philosophical thinking for young students.

People often comment that young people like to ask “big” questions. At four or five years of age, children start asking what are often called the “why” questions. Parents and teachers can feel stymied by such questions because there are no clear explanations readily available to answer them. But these questions don’t call for explanations. They are invitations. They invite us to dip into thinking about fundamental mysteries, about which philosophers have debated for centuries and for which there are no ready answers. The questions invite us to wonder. This is the core of philosophy. It is our belief that many young people are naturally inclined to engage in it, and this issue illustrates some of the ways that they do.

Jana Mohr Lone, *Editor-in-Chief*

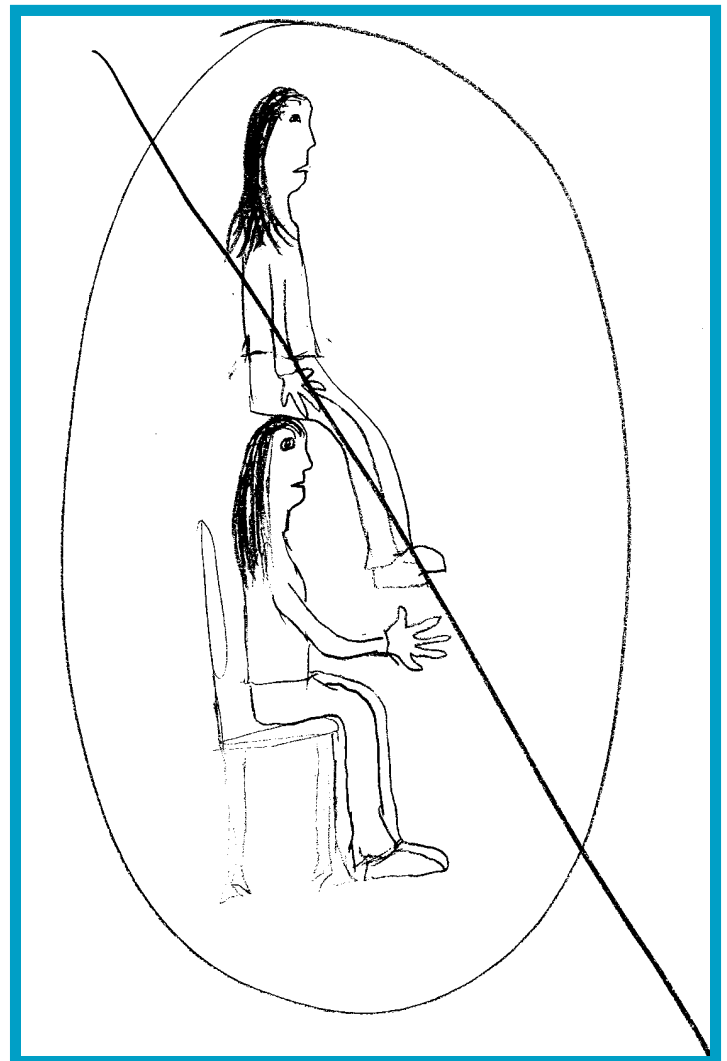
## Contents

Introduction .....	1
Editorial Board .....	2
Doing Philosophy with Young Students .....	2
A Conversation with Children:	
Children’s Rights in School and at Home .....	3
Grownups and Children .....	4
Philosophy, Childhood, and Subjectivity .....	4
Smithtown Middle School	
Great Book Discussion Group .....	7
On Children’s Rights and Patience .....	8
What Do Rights Look Like? .....	11
High School Essays on Families .....	12
Resources and Ideas for Discussions about	
Children’s Rights .....	14
Editors and Facilitators .....	15

## Children’s Rights

This pilot issue of *Questions* is devoted to questions about children’s rights. What is a child? How are children different from adults? What rights should parents and other adults have over children? What gives parents the rights to make some decisions for their children? Should young people be entitled to make their own decisions?

Teachers and philosophers from 8 states and 3 countries facilitated discussions with K-12 students about these and other children’s rights issues. This issue includes excerpts from some of those discussions, as well as essays, drawings and poems by the students.



*“The right to not have people sit on my head.”*  
Grade 6 Student, Whitman Middle School, Seattle