



HELLO PARENTS,

A child's natural curiosity helps lay the foundation for critical thinking. Critical thinking requires us to understand information, analyze it and make judgements about it. This type of active engagement requires imagination and inquisitiveness. Children must think about how the new information correlates with what they already know. We use critical thinking skills every day. They help us to make good decisions, understand the consequences of our actions and solve problems. It is the process of using focus and self-control to set and follow through with goals. Critical thinkers utilize other important life skills, such as making connections, perspective turn-taking and communicating. In this newsletter, we will provide you with play-based activities which build upon on your child's natural curiosity and boost their critical thinking skills.

ACTIVITIES

INFANTS (3 -18 MONTHS)

REACHING FOR IT!

MATERIALS:

- Different toys. For example: balls, stuffed animals, cars, blocks, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

- Place your infant on a soft blanket and arrange interesting toys just far enough away from your infant so that they can stretch their fingers and grasp the toys.
- Move the toys a little further and observe what the infant does.
- When your infant reaches out to you to get the soft toy, they are learning. They have just discovered that they can stretch their arm out to touch the toy.

[Click here](#) to learn more about thinking skills.

TODDLERS (19 MONTHS – 2.5 YEARS)

MATCHING ITEMS BY FUNCTION

MATERIALS:

- Different items. For example: doll, baby bottle, cars, small people, etc.

DIRECTIONS:

- Gather several items and place them on the floor.
- Encourage your child to identify the use of each one.
- For example, you can have a doll with a baby bottle, a figurine and a toy car, a small bowl and a plastic spoon, etc.
- As your child explores the items and makes associations, you can say: "You are using the baby bottle to feed the doll".

[Click here](#) for more activities.

PRESCHOOLERS (2.5 – 5 YEARS)

COUNTING IN MEANINGFUL WAYS

MATERIALS:

- | | |
|----------------------|------------|
| • Construction paper | • Glue |
| • A big white paper | • Scissors |
| • Markers | • Legos |

DIRECTIONS:

- Ask your child to sort the Legos by colour and encourage them to count how many Legos are in each coloured pile. For example, there are nine blue Legos.
- Once your child is finished, ask them to stack each coloured pile of Legos, one on top of the other. For example, stack the red pile of Legos on top of each other.
- [Click here](#) to print a Graphing Colours chart or you can draw the chart on a white paper.
- Help your child cut small squares from different coloured construction papers.
- Ask your child to pick a coloured pile of Legos, and encourage them to pull out a Lego, one by one.
- After your child pulls out one Lego, let them glue a small square, they have cut out, on their Graphing Colours chart. For example, if your child pulls out the first Lego from the blue pile, have your child glue a square on the blue column in the chart, next to number one.
- If you do not have construction paper ask your child to use the markers to colour each box in the Graphing Colours chart.

- While playing the game ask your child questions. For example: "Which coloured pile has more Legos?" and "Which colour has less Legos?"

[Click here](#) for more activities.

JK/SK (4 – 6 YEARS)

THE CRITICAL THINKING COMPARISON GAME

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pen

DIRECTIONS:

- Write a few questions like the ones below:

HOW ARE THESE THINGS ALIKE?

- A house is like a nest because...
- Ice cubes and snow are alike because...
- Marbles are like baseballs because...
- Glue and honey are alike because...

HOW ARE THESE THINGS DIFFERENT?

- A book is not like a movie because...
- Homes are not like tents because...
- Legos are not like blocks because...
- A lion is not like a kitty cat because...
- Let your child think and talk about these remarks. This is a great activity for developing language and critical thinking skills in young children!

[Click here](#) to read "Curious George" by H.A. Rey

SCHOOL-AGERS (6 – 12 YEARS)

FAMILY DEBATE NIGHT

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens

DIRECTIONS:

- Tell your family that you would like to host a debate night once a week. For example, every Friday night.
- On a piece of paper, have each family member write down a topic they would like to debate.
- During "Debate Night", with your family, choose a topic that you would like to debate.
- Divide the members of your family into two teams: "For" and "Against".
- The team "For" will write down ideas about why they are for the topic.
- The team "Against" will write down ideas about why they are against the topic.
- When it is time to debate, each team presents their ideas.
- Once your debate is finished, decide which team, the "For" or the "Against", presented the strongest case.

[Click here](#) to learn more about debate lessons.



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A TIP FOR TODAY

- Provide your child with ample opportunities for play.
- Pause and wait; let your child evaluate the situation.
- Do not intervene immediately.
- Encourage your child to ask questions.
- Ask your child to consider alternative explanations and solutions.
- When your child considers multiple solutions, they may become more flexible thinkers.