

PROMOTING HEALTHY COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT IN YOUR CHILD

Your child's incredible mind has been growing and changing since the moment she was born. He is on a path to developing complex thoughts. She is eager to learn, question and make sense of the world around her. He is developing cognitively.

Children's cognitive skills are improved when they form questions and find solutions by themselves or along with another person. Knowing how to go through the process of questioning, discovery, reflection, evaluation and finding solutions helps children become life-long learners. The steps of problem-solving, not just the answer, are the key to a child's learning.

Here are some ideas that may help your child develop strong learning and thinking skills:

- Let your child know that what she thinks and questions is valued. Listen to her questions very carefully. Your child will have a stronger sense of self-worth and approach challenges with confidence.
- Ask questions and set up opportunities to provoke your child to think for himself. Encourage him to come up with original ideas. Wait and listen to them. Show an authentic respect for his ideas.
- Encourage your child to try various methods for problem solving. Some examples could be talking, drawing, acting out a skit, painting, or making a model of clay. Help your child keep trying until he finds a solution that works for him.
- Take trips to interesting places such as a museum, library, or local business to stimulate your child's curiosity and sense of wonder. Offer hands-on experiences during these trips to allow for further exploration. Bring along paper, writing utensils, a camera, or recorder to capture any thoughts or questions.
- Play a variety of games with your child. For younger children: build with blocks, roll balls, and play Peek-a-Boo. As your child matures: play board games and memory games, work on puzzles, and play Hide and Seek.
- Choose toys for your child that encourage a variety of ways to play. Toys that can only be played with in one way limit children's creativity and opportunities for problem-solving. Some suggestions would be: blocks, connecting toys, cardboard boxes, tracks and cars, paints, pencils, paper, homemade clay, instruments, etc.