

Parent Playbook

ENGAGING YOUR CHILD IN CRITICAL THINKING AT HOME

1

Play board games that increase your child's knowledge by providing new information such as new words, comparisons, ideas, and content that really makes them think. **Examples include Monopoly, Apples to Apples, and Scrabble.**

2

Avoid questions that elicit a yes or no response. Ask your child, "Why..." **For example, don't ask if they like camping; ask why they like it (or don't like it) and encourage them to give an explanation.**

3

Engage in window-gazing at home or in the car. Ask your children: **"What do you see?" Encourage them to describe the object or action with as many descriptive words as possible.**

4

Ask your child to read you a story (rather than you reading to him/her). Listen for which words are challenging and help your child sound them out. Pay attention to pace and make sure they read with a sentence cadence rather than announcing each word independently of a complete sentence. **This is a form or guided reading that promotes comprehension.**

5

Engage your child in a debate. Teach him/her what pros and cons are and what persuasion is. Give an example of an issue in current events or in your family. Explain your position on the issue with three persuasive reasons why you took this position. **Give examples such as why to make up the bed and why not. Or, discuss reasons why you should do chores and reasons why chores are not necessary.**

6

Discuss current events. Watch the news together and choose a topic to discuss. Encourage your child to listen carefully so s/he can explain what s/he learned, liked or did not like. **For example: What is happening with fires in CA? What/who starts the fires? How are the border states affected by the smoke? What impact do these fires have on families, animals, and neighborhoods?**

7

Cook together. Teach your child how to read recipes, gather and measure ingredients, assemble kitchen tools, and manage cooking time. **Talk about different seasonings and explain where they come from. Discuss healthy eating and family traditions related to meals.**

8

Write cards and letters to loved ones or friends across the miles. This can be done electronically or with pen and paper. Children need to practice writing, creating their own message, and articulating how they feel. **They also need to practice summarizing info to share with someone. Journaling is another good writing activity.**

9

Ask your child "what if" questions. **For example: What if there were dinosaurs living near us? What if you could travel to any country in the world, which one and why? What if there were no cell phones or computers, how would people communicate?**

10

Introduce your child to new vocabulary. Decide on a word each week. Explain the definition and use the word in a sentence. Encourage your child to use the word every day in context. Establish a reward system for learning new words (i.e. extra play time). **It is best to use the selected word repeatedly for an entire week so your child will be able to retain it. A new word each day is easy to forget. Repetition increases memory.**



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