

Home learning ideas

Services for Young Children - Issue 12

This is a guide to help and support you as parents and carers with providing your children with fun experiences in the home and garden.

We will aim to refresh this on a regular basis to help you keep young minds busy and bodies active.

While we will do our best to verify all the websites which we share, information is changing rapidly so please be aware that it is only accurate at the time of writing.



How do children learn?

When we think of school, pre-school and childminder settings, it is easy to think about being taught to read, write and understand maths. But alongside these are other skills and knowledge that children can develop and practice that will help them to learn. In schools, pre-schools and childminder settings, these skills are referred to as the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning' and they simply describe the way children learn.

This home learning edition will explore these skills that are grouped under the title of **Creating and Thinking Critically**.

Sue Allingham explains this in more detail on the Family website [Characteristics part 3 - Thinking critically](#).



family.

These words describe some of the skills the children are learning through Creating and Thinking Critically.



Creating and Thinking Critically – Children have their own ideas and can make links in their understanding. They can choose ways of doing things.

Ideas Predicting
Thinking ahead Solving
Testing Evaluating
Reviewing Choosing
Checking Planning Patterns
Deciding Speculating
Investigating Exploring

Some schools create characters to help the children connect with the characteristics – here is a dinosaur called an 'Thinkasaurus'. Ask your child what they use at their school or setting.

Creating and thinking critically



Planning and making models

Try building a train set, car track or block village. Encourage your child to think about and plan their model.

Are they able to share their ideas with you before they build?

Can they draw a map or picture of the model?

Problem solve with your child

- We have run out of straight pieces.
- The track doesn't join up.
- I haven't got enough bricks for the roof.

Encourage your child to come up with solutions and test their ideas and have another go if it doesn't work. Allowing your child to struggle a little helps them to learn new skills.

Floating and sinking. Collect some small toys from around the house (ones that will not be damaged in water).

Encourage your child to predict what might happen.

Will it float or sink?

Why do you think this?

They might be able to make some links, for example.

"I know that will float because I saw it floating in a puddle."

"I think this will sink because it is big, and the big stone sunk"



Supervise you child when playing with water.



As part of your daily routine...

Encourage your child to make choices.

At bedtime have a discussion about the day ahead. For example. "I wonder what we could do tomorrow, it's going to be sunny?"

Encourage your child to make suggestions. You can give them choices. Ask why they have made that choice.



Creating and thinking critically



Ensure children aren't left alone while they investigate and they only touch plants and animals that are safe.

Children love to investigate. Provide the children with opportunities to **explore nature** by

- moving stones
- looking under logs
- smelling and touching flowers and leaves.

Encourage the children to talk about and describe what they find.

Research shows that children benefit from hearing **8 new words every day**. Talking to your children as they investigate will help them to hear new words.



Finding patterns and making links are similar. A pattern can be that all shiny things stick to a magnet. Making a link means that you know that they are all made of metal, because metal sticks to a magnet.



For children to do this successfully they need to be allowed to explore a range of objects. You can help your child by talking to them about what they are exploring. Treasure baskets are a way to encourage investigation.

On a walk outside look for patterns. Perhaps you'll see a butterfly, a pinecone or a snail. Could you use any of these to create your own pattern?

Treasure baskets
– guide to making a treasure basket.



As part of your daily routine...

As your child pours their drink, ask whether...
it is full, nearly full, or empty?

"I wonder whose cup holds more water?"

Link it to when they play with water at pre-school or fill a bucket with sand. The terms full and empty, apply to many different experiences.



Creating and thinking critically



Share the story *We're Going on a Bear Hunt*. Here is a YouTube link of the story read by the author. [We're going on a bear hunt read by Michael Rosen](#)

While out on a walk when you reach somewhere, like a big puddle, ask "How are we going to go through this?" Using the repeating line from the story. Encourage your child to make suggestions.

As part of your daily routine...

Encourage your child to make choices as part of the daily routine, allow them to choose their clothes. Ask them

Why have you chosen those items?

Do they match?

Are they appropriate for the weather?

You may need to limit the choice to begin with, as making a choice can be overwhelming for some children.

Fill a bucket with water and add in leaves and petals that have fallen or fill with dry pasta and rice.

Set a challenge, "I need to get all of the leaves/pasta out, I wonder how I can do this? Shall I use this spoon or the sieve?".

Allow your child to choose or come up with their own idea.

Closely supervise
your
child when



When your child engages in simple activities such as painting, set the activity up to encourage choice.

Allow your child to choose the colours, the paper and the brush they use.

This link explains why choice is important for children - [Meaningful choices](#)

Creating and thinking critically

As part of your daily routine...

At the end of the day talk with your child about the day they have just had.

What did you enjoy doing the most?

Did you enjoy your lunch?

What would you like tomorrow?

You could even create a daily diary together; this encourages your child to be reflective and review their day.



Shopping list.

Write a list with your child before a trip to the shops. Involve your child in planning what is needed for lunch, or tea.

When you get home cross off the things you bought. Is there anything you couldn't buy?

To make it simpler use pictures on the list and then your child can just tick the things you need.



Ensure furniture is stable and safe for the children in the den.



Make a den

Encourage your child to plan their den before they make it, help to make a list and gather what they need.

Once the den is made think about which bits are good, and which bits need to be changed.

How many people can fit in the den?

Is the door big enough?

Is there space for my teddies?