
Facilitating Preschoolers' Reasoning Skills

INSTRUCTIONS

This handout was designed for use with the video, "Higher Order Thinking," from Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority. The questions and activities in this handout could be used in a work session (e.g., professional learning community, professional development session), for individual coaching, or for self-reflection.

Goals

- ◆ Discuss the benefits of engaging preschoolers in opportunities to reason and problem solve.
- ◆ Discuss effective strategies for engaging preschoolers in higher order thinking through learning experiences at home and within the learning environment.
- ◆ In partnership with families, plan a learning experience designed to support preschoolers' reasoning skills.

Activity

- ◆ Watch the video.
- ◆ Use the questions below to reflect on effective ways to support preschoolers' reasoning skills.
- ◆ Implement your plan and adjust as needed to support preschoolers' reasoning skills.

If we are wanting children to actually engage in high-order thinking, we need to actually provide spaces for substantial conversations to occur within our classrooms.

Queensland Curriculum and Assessment Authority

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- ◆ What caught your attention from the video? What made that fact, excerpt, or example meaningful to you?
- ◆ The educator in the video provided children opportunities to test out ideas, sort materials, and make predictions. As children engage in these types of higher order learning opportunities, they develop reasoning skills. Reflect on your current practice.
 - What higher order learning experiences are preschoolers engaged in at your learning environment? How do you think those experiences have benefited the preschoolers in your care?
 - Have you discussed the benefits of higher order learning experiences with families?
 - If so, what have families shared about their children's reasoning skills?
 - If not, how can you connect with families to discuss the benefits of higher order learning experiences and learn more about their child from their perspective?
- ◆ The narrator states that we need to provide space for substantial conversations to occur for children to engage in higher order thinking. In the video, we see an educator engaged in conversations with children, allowing them opportunities to explain their thinking and develop reasoning skills. Reflect on your current practice.
 - How do you encourage children to reason during conversations? What follow up questions do you ask?
 - How do you think opportunities to explain their thinking and justify decisions help children to develop reasoning skills?
 - Some families may have concerns about not being able to answer children's questions during higher order thinking experiences. How can you encourage families to engage in conversations with children even when they ask difficult questions?
- ◆ Plan a learning experience based on the children's interests, in which educators and families facilitate preschoolers' reasoning skills. Note that some family members may feel more comfortable observing as you model strategies while others may want to immediately participate and support children's reasoning skills.
 - How can you involve families in developing a higher order learning experience?
 - How will you encourage families to engage in substantial conversations with children during the experience? Consider any resources that will support your efforts and plan accordingly.
 - Implement the steps identified, monitor children's progress, and adjust the plan as needed to support children's reasoning skills.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Learn more about facilitating preschoolers' reasoning skills:

- ◆ **Source:** Head Start ECLKC; Early Childhood Knowledge and Learning Center
- ◆ **Video:** Fostering Children's Thinking Skills
- ◆ **Link:** <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/video/fostering-childrens-thinking-skills>
- ◆ **Description:** This presentation shares ways educators can support children in using thinking skills to gain deeper understandings and acquire new knowledge. Some strategies shared in the video may be helpful to families as well.

- ◆ **Source:** CECE Early Childhood Videos at Eastern CT State U.
- ◆ **Video:** Providing Opportunities for Problem Solving and Experimentation
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tMIDf4ICVHw>
- ◆ **Description:** In this video, an educator describes how she purposefully plans experiences to provide children with opportunities to experiment and solve problems. Use ideas from this video as you co-plan a family learning experience that supports children's reasoning skills through opportunities to experiment and problem solve.

- ◆ **Source:** PBS
- ◆ **Article:** Growing Minds; Developing Thinking and Reasoning Skills
- ◆ **Link:** <https://www.pbs.org/wholechild/parents/minds.html>
- ◆ **Description:** This article offers caregivers strategies such as asking thought provoking questions and allowing children to make predictions, to support children's thinking and reasoning skills. Use this article to support families in facilitating children's thinking and reasoning skills.