

Metacognition

Just practicing the core intelligence skills is not enough to unlock your child's real learning potential. Your child must also learn to monitor, evaluate and expand his or her own thinking skills. This is called **metacognition**. In each of the lessons, it is the **LEARNING HOW WE THINK** section.

Just as you consciously helped your child learn to talk, you can consciously direct and improve your child's development of an inner thinking language. With **The Art of Learning®**, you have the opportunity to become aware of and guide your child's inner thinking voice.

The metacognitive skills you teach your child now will lay the foundation for your child to develop, plan and expand his/her strategies as your child grows older. Thus, you can give your child the tools to help navigate the way to becoming a life-long learner and feel comfortable in new learning situations.

Teach your child to make connections between past learning experiences and current learning. Adults, especially parents, can help a child make connections between a familiar situation and a new one. When you build on a child's existing understanding to teach your child something new, it is far more likely that your child will acquire a more thorough understanding of the new skills.

Because little learners often have difficulty verbalizing their thoughts, you should encourage your child to continue to express his/her thoughts. At first, your child may reply, "I don't know... I just did it." Take time to teach your child to wonder why he/she is doing what he/she is doing and how he/she could do it differently or better next time. Try to understand what is going on in your child's mind and to ask a question or indicate a step that could have occurred to your child.

If your child is having difficulty verbalizing or remembering in the **LEARNING HOW WE THINK** section, then ask your child to think aloud in the **PRACTICE** section. Guide your child to express everything he/she is thinking, step-by-step, during in the **PRACTICE** section. Encourage your child with such questions as: "tell me what you are thinking?"..."what is your next step...?" Over time, you will want your child to be able to focus on the exercises in the **PRACTICE** section and then discuss it with you in the **LEARNING HOW WE THINK** section.

Be patient, positive, and encouraging! Allow your child time to process and learn new information. This is the age at which your child is developing his/her thinking habits. When possible, make sure your child understands problems before jumping immediately to solution strategies. Help your child refine and improve his/her problem-solving strategies, even when those strategies are not quite right, and... build on prior success. Help your child develop a sense of how, when and what has been learned that can be used in a new or different situation. Give your child feedback about the degree to which they know when, where and how to use the knowledge they are learning. Teach your child how to self-correct his/her mistakes, develop new strategies, and be open to other people's strategies.

The **LEARNING HOW WE THINK** section of each lesson is a first step in teaching your child **metacognition** strategies. As your child develops, **metacognition** strategies should include predicting outcomes, planning ahead, and explaining problems and solutions in order to improve understanding and future problem solution. Look for opportunities to incorporate these strategies in everyday life; suggestions are provided in the **HAVE FUN SHARPENING THE BRAIN** section of each lesson.