

## Give your child the time and space to think critically



Critical thinking—the ability to go beyond basic knowledge and consider “the bigger picture”—is a crucial skill for school success. The better students are able to think critically, the more deeply they will grasp new concepts and ideas.

To promote these skills:

- Let your child figure things out. Resist the urge to solve every problem. Instead, give her time to work through problems herself. If she’s forgotten what she is supposed to do for homework, don’t offer to email the teacher. Instead, ask, “How could you find out?” Can she call a classmate? Look over last night’s assignment for clues? Give her space to come up with a plan.
- Discuss current events. Is there a news story that might interest her? Print out an article and chat about it over dinner. Find out what she thinks about the issue, but don’t stop there. Once she’s shared her opinion, press her a bit. “I can see how you feel about this. But why do you think other people might feel differently?”
- Encourage reflection. Once your child completes a big project for school, talk about it. Ask her, “How difficult was it to finish? Did you give yourself enough time to complete it?” Regardless of how the project went, reflecting on the process will help her hone her critical-thinking skills.

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