

CNMI BRAIN BUILDERS NEWSLETTER



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May
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GLANCE



Mind in the Making for Child Care Providers Cohort 6 continues with *Life Skill 5: Critical Thinking*. They are set to complete the training series on June 03, 2023.

Parents from Northern Mariana International School (NMIS) and Golden Harvest International School (GHIS) are also half-way into completing the Mind in the Making training series.



"All children in the CNMI will be safe, healthy, and thriving members of a culturally diverse community. Their families will have access to the high quality supports they need to achieve their potential."





**CNMI BRAIN
BUILDERS**

MIND IN THE MAKING: THE 7 ESSENTIAL LIFE SKILLS

LIFE SKILL OF THE MONTH

May 2023 | Issue 05

Promoting Critical Thinking

Everyday Routines

Involve children in coming up with solutions: “What ideas do you have that would help you calm down when you get upset?” Have children list ideas. Write them all down.

Playful Learning Activities

Invite children to play pretend games where they are detectives and have to solve mysteries.

Learning Strategies

When children ask a question in which they could figure out the answer, don’t answer right away. Help them pursue the answer for themselves to spark their curiosity and critical thinking.

THE LIFE SKILL OF CRITICAL THINKING

This Life Skill is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions. Critical Thinking involves executive function skills, including using what you know to search for information (working memory); seeing information in new ways as you seek to deepen your understanding (cognitive flexibility); and not going on automatic and reverting to outdated information but using the information you have obtained (inhibitory control).



Critical Thinking is essential in making sense of the world and being a problem solver. It follows a developmental path, emerging in children over time, but its use must be promoted.

THE LIFE SKILL OF CRITICAL THINKING



Past Event Photos



Critical Thinking is the ongoing search for valid and reliable knowledge to guide beliefs, decisions and actions.

There are many things we can do to encourage curiosity and persistence by promoting the life skill of Critical Thinking.

1. Encourage your child to explore, to ask questions, to be curious.

The American Academy of Pediatrics suggests appreciating your child's investigative nature and avoiding excessively restricting explorations. Guide your child through fun learning experiences.

When your child asks questions, she is trying to figure things out. You can keep the back-and-forth conversation going by asking her questions and by drawing her attention to things that she may be curious about.

For example:

- "What do you think would happen if you pushed that toy under water in the bathtub?" or "What do you think the dog is trying to tell us by barking?"
- "Your question is interesting. What are your ideas about what the answers might be?"

2. Be a role model of curiosity.

Children have a drive to understand the world around them—to figure things out. If you show that you are interested in learning new things, in figuring things out and in wondering, then your child is likely to follow your lead.

3. Don't answer your child's questions too quickly or do things for your child.

Laura Schulz of MIT has found that children lose interest more quickly when adults tell them the answers to their questions than when they let kids continue to explore.

When your daughter asks a question, see if she can figure out the answer by herself, acting like a scientist and conducting an experiment. For example, if she notices that butter melts on the toast, ask whether that is always true, and see if butter melts on toast that is cold or just on toast that is hot.

4. Work up to harder problems—stretch your child, but not too far.

Give your daughter easier puzzles at first, and, as she succeeds in doing those, make the puzzles a little bit harder. Think of this as stretching your child just a little above what she has done before. If you take over and do things for your child (like finishing the puzzle), the message to your daughter is that you can do the puzzle, but she can't. Instead, help her solve the puzzle.

5. Provide clues when your child is trying to figure out something.

In helping your child solve the puzzle, provide clues such as,

- "This part of the picture is blue. Do you see other puzzle pieces that are blue?"
- "This shape is curved. Do you see any places on the puzzle where a curved shape might fit?"

6. Praise children for their strategies, not their personalities.

Carol Dweck of Stanford University has found that if adults praise children's strategies—"You are working hard!"—rather than their intelligence—"You are so smart!"—children are more likely to try hard things, or, in Dweck's words, "love challenge."

When your child is working hard, you can say:

- "You are using many different ways to figure out how to do this puzzle, like finding colors that go together."
- "When something you try doesn't work, you keep trying. That is the way you learn new things."



LEARN MORE AT WWW.MINDINTHEMAKING.ORG

Featured Researcher:
Laura Schulz Ph.D.



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Technology (MIT)

"The first thing you might think about curiosity is that we're curious about the novel; we're not curious about the familiar"

Today We Are...
Ages 0-5



As you leave the house, talk to your child about the plans for the day. "We're going to the grocery store to buy some food." Ask questions like, "What do you think we should buy? Why?" Continue the conversation, "When we get home we're going to cook this food for dinner!"

See what your child is learning

Brainy Background

When you encourage your child to pay attention to the things around them and tune out distractions, you're helping them build focus and self-control. As you talk together, they're also developing vocabulary by connecting colors and their names.



For more activities like these, check out the free Vroom mobile app!

vroom

#vroomtip
of the
month

Congratulations to the winners of CNMI Brain Builders April Contest!



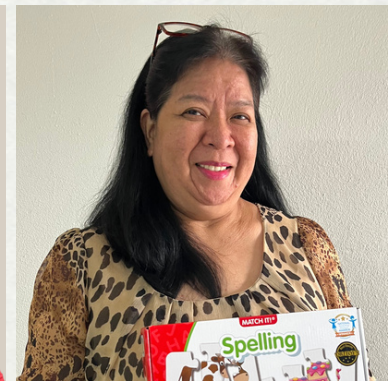
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Vince/Sanivette Sablan



Mylene Macapagal



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