Critical thinking begins with a child’s curiosity about the world around them. Starting at an early age, children begin to make scientific discoveries by asking questions and exploring ideas through hands-on experiences to construct knowledge.

Ways to support your child’s critical thinking:

* **Ask questions:** Questions such as, “What did you notice when...?” or “Why do you think...?” help children focus on making observations.

* **Make predictions:** Questions like, “What do you think will happen if...?” encourages children to come up with theories for why something happens.

* **Resist the urge to problem solve for them:** Allowing your child to make their own discoveries and to make mistakes is an important step in their learning to problem-solve.

* **Praise your child’s efforts, not personality:** Rather than saying, “You are so clever,” praise the strategies they are trying as they seek a solution. This will help them learn perseverance and to challenge themselves.

**Why is this important?**

Critical thinking is an essential life skill that helps children figure out how to use the information they have learned to find solutions to problems. It involves asking questions and conducting experiments to find their own answers.

Adapted from *Mind in the Making: The Seven Essential Life Skills Every Child Needs* by Dr. Ellen Galinsky

www.mindinthemaking.org