



Your Child is Learning To Discover!

Every time your child observes something or tries to question or understand what she sees, she is using scientific thinking. It's not just about facts. It's about discovering things, knowing how to ask questions and find answers.

Scientific thinking is one of the skills your child will need in order to be ready to start school. Right now, in the ordinary things you do with your child every day, you can help him to build these abilities. You'll be preparing your child to do well in school when you help him at home to:

YOUR INFANT:

- Let your baby play with pull toys, "touch and feel" books, and other toys that he can examine and interact with.
- Help your child to learn "cause and effect" with toys that squeak, rattle, light up, or play music when they are handled. With a rattle, for example, let baby look at it and touch it. Show her how you shake it to make sounds.
- Hide a toy under a blanket and let your baby find it.

YOUR TODDLER:

- Have reading time at least once a day. Choose some stories in English or Spanish that ask your child questions or give him things to figure out.
- Blow soap bubbles. Toddlers love to watch and pop the bubbles. Talk about how his breath helps to make the bubble.
- Give your child a paper bag. Have a scavenger hunt. Say, for example, "Let's find something green" or "Let's find something soft."
- Feed the birds with breadcrumbs or birdseed. Help your toddler to notice the differences between birds.
- Play a listening game where you close your eyes and identify the sounds of things: cars, wind, footsteps, birds, and insects.

YOUR PRESCHOOLER:

- Make reading a part of every day. Choose some stories in English or Spanish that give your child things to figure out. Also choose books on topics you know your child likes: music, dinosaurs, anything.
- Help your child to take a cutting from a houseplant and let it be "her" plant. As it grows roots in water and you later move it into soil, help her to keep track of how it grows.
- See how different things sink or float in water: a sponge, a spoon, a toy boat, and a bar of soap.
- Take turns pretending to be an animal, while the other person has to guess which animal.
- Look at clouds. Talk about shape, size, color, and movement. What do cloud shapes look like? Also try this with leaves on trees, or with anything else that feeds your imagination.

ParentTips is a monthly resource for parents with young children.
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