



The cognitive domain focuses on how children pay attention to and think about the world around them.

Cognitive development (also known as brain development), happens during every day experiences and interactions. These experiences help young children learn how to solve problems, remember things, and develop self-control and reasoning skills.

In this domain your child will develop skills in these specific areas:

Logic and Reasoning: Young children use things that they have experienced before to help them understand new things.

Memory and Working Memory: Young children build the ability to remember over time. They begin to use memories to help them complete a task.

Attention and Inhibitory Control: Young children get better at focusing on tasks, controlling their emotions and bodies, and “tuning out” distractions.

Cognitive Flexibility: Young children learn to see things from different points of view, and to accept change.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

BOOKS

BABIES & TODDLERS

Dear Zoo by Rod Campbell

*The Very Hungry Caterpillar by Eric Carle**

*Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? by Bill Martin Jr.**

*Where's Spot? by Eric Hill**

*Blue Hat, Green Hat by Sandra Boynton**

*Freight Train by Donald Crews**

Clap Your Hands by Lorinda Bryan Cauley

PRESCHOOLERS

It Looked Like Spilled Milk by Charles G. Shaw

*The Snowy Day by Ezra Jack Keats**

*The Napping House by Audrey Wood**

*Caps for Sale by Esphyr Stobokina**

*Harold and the Purple Crayon by Crockett Johnson**

*The Carrot Seed by Ruth Krauss**

*Mouse Paint by Ellen Stoll Walsh**

You Go Away by Dorothy Corey

Where Can It Be? by Ann Jonas

** Available in Spanish*

All books available through the Rhode Island Library system

NOTE: Your child's brain is constantly growing and changing and the all of the activities in these cards will support that growth in one way or another. Look for the Cognitive Domain symbol as you read through the cards. You will find that most of the activities support the cognitive skills listed above.

Remember Me

Young children learn to think about objects or people who are out of sight.

ACTIVITIES

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- As your child learns to think about you when you are out of sight, separations may be unsettling for both of you. You can prepare your child for these separations by talking about what will happen. For example, "Mama is going to go to the store for a bit. But I am going to come back soon. When I do, we can read a book together!"
- For toddlers and preschoolers, it can be helpful to talk about familiar people even when they are not around. Children at these ages are learning that people continue to exist even when they cannot be seen.

REFLECTIONS

- Does your child have a special hiding place for favorite objects? If not, create and decorate a treasure chest out of an old box, tote bag, or paper bag.



BABIES

Older babies begin to understand that objects and people still exist even when they are out of view. Play Peek-A-Boo with your baby. Hide your face behind a blanket and ask, "Where did I go?" Remove the blanket and say, "Peek- A -Boo!" This can also be done by hiding a favorite toy under a blanket and asking, "Where did it go?"



TODDLERS

Toddlers are beginning to learn where things are kept and can get them when needed.

When your child wants something, you can ask, "Where do we keep that?" Then you can go and look together. This will help your child develop the ability use memory to solve problems.



PRESCHOOLERS

Your preschooler uses memory and thinking skills to solve simple problems, like how to find a missing toy, where to find a piece of clothing or how to put a puzzle together.

Another way to develop thinking skills is to talk about every day events to help your child remember experiences in the correct order. For example, "Remember when we went to the park? What different things did we do?" Use descriptive words to recall details.

Problem Solvers!

Young children develop cognitive skills that help them respond to changes and solve problems.

ACTIVITIES



BABIES

Even very young babies are problem solvers. They learn to use eye contact and vocal sounds to draw attention from others. When they are old enough to grab toys, they often enjoy throwing them to see what happens or banging them on the floor or a table. Help your child to explore and solve “problems,” like “What sound does this toy make when I squeeze it or bang it?” or “I want to put that toy in my mouth, but can’t reach it.” Pay attention to your baby’s cues, like crying or grunting, and see if you can connect those sounds to a “problem” your baby is trying to solve, like “I’m hungry,” or “I want someone to come play with me!”



TODDLERS

Toddlers become very interested in solving their own problems. This means they like playing with toys or real items that pop up or make a sound when a button is pressed. They also like to solve “problems” like putting things together and pulling apart or finding out how things work, like the TV remote or the sink faucet. Give your child lots of opportunities to solve these kinds of problems. Encourage your child to do things independently, like turning the water on and off at bath time, helping to buckle or unbuckle a high chair or car seat, or trying to match lids with the correct containers.



PRESCHOOLERS

Preschoolers are learning to use what they know to help plan for and solve problems. They begin to think about how things happen in their play and make changes. When you play with your preschooler, point out “problems” like blocks that will not balance, or toys that sink to the bottom of the tub, or not having enough space to fit toys in a box. Ask your child to help you make a plan to solve the problem and then try it together. Then talk about why it did or did not work.

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

Additional Domains:



TIPS

- Remember to be patient when children are trying to solve problems. Children often do things over and over again to see what happens. For example, pushing a cup off the high chair or knocking a tower of blocks over. They also may try lots of things that don’t work before finding out what does work. They learn just as much through the “wrong” ways as they do the “right” ways. Encourage all attempts and give support if your child appears to get frustrated.
- Toddlers may be very determined to solve their own “problems.” But they also may not yet have the skills they need to solve the problems on their own. They are also still learning how to ask for help when they need it. Allow your toddler to try doing some things independently, but pay attention to whether help is needed and offer to help with some or all of the task.
- Toddlers and preschoolers enjoy sorting and comparing objects. Some “problems” children like to solve include putting things into different piles, or picking all of the things out of a pile that are in their favorite color or colors. Older children often enjoy making patterns with objects, which is another way of sorting and comparing.

REFLECTIONS

- Think about some problems you encounter each day—simple things that may be interesting to your child. For example, making sure everyone gets the same number of crackers for snack or making more room on a shelf for books. What are some problems you could talk about with your child and work together to solve?