



School to Home Connection

Grades 5-6

Teachers expect their students to bring to the classroom certain levels of mental processing to empower mastery of reading, spelling, handwriting, mathematics and other basic and advanced curriculum content. So all students may improve their academic performance by developing the cognitive abilities that are foundational to all learning and behavior. Cognitive development is the purpose or by-product of the age-appropriate activities and products listed below. Depending on the student's developmental level and interests, the activities and products on our other lists (Grades K-2, 3, 4, Secondary) may also be appropriate.

Figural Thinking

Figural thinking is the ability to process information in the form of images, shapes and simple sounds. It appeals to the senses of sight, sound and touch - what we can directly see, hear and touch. It may be a photo, a sound, a gesture. This is a very important ability for beginning learners. Figural thinking is required to learn such subjects as Science and Drama.

- Learning sports and game rules
- How People Lived*, by DK Publishing
- Building Thinking Skills: Figural*, by Howard Black
- Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises*, by Mark Carwardine (DK)
- Nerf target games
- Ping-pong
- Tangrams
- Prehistoric Life*, by A. McCord (DK)
- 3D Rocks & Minerals*, by Cally Oldershaw (DK)

Symbolic Thinking

Symbolic thinking is the ability to process information in the form of numbers, letters, signs, musical notation and other code systems that combine their elements in many diverse ways. Symbolic thinking is required to learn such subjects as Math and Computer Programming.

- Computer programming
- Music/musical instruments software
- Math for Every Kid*, by Janice Vancleave
- Calculator games
- Complex board games
- Formal dance steps and routines
- Talking decisions and solutions aloud
- Spelling bees and games

Semantic Thinking

Semantic thinking is the ability to process information in the form of words and ideas. Semantic information is abstract because one person's interpretation of an idea can differ from another's. Nevertheless, this conceptual difference is usually not great enough to interfere with communication. Semantic thinking is required to learn such subjects as Language Arts and Social Studies.

- Chalkboard for leaving messages
- Building Thinking Skills: Verbal*, by Howard Black
- Metaphors Dictionary*, by Elyse Sommer
- The Illustrated Dictionary of Mythology*, by Philip Wilkinson & Neil Philip (DK)
- Diary/journal-writing
- Getting Used to the Dark*, by Susan Marie Swanson
- DK Classics* books (various)
- Corresponding with pen pals
- Analogies

Comprehension

Comprehension is understanding - the immediate awareness or recognition of new information in any form. Students must be able to comprehend before they can learn. Comprehension is required to learn all school subjects.

- *Find the Constellations*, by Hans Augusto Rey
- *Vocabulary Cartoons*, by Sam Burchers
- Math or word games
- *Animal Farm*, by George Orwell - book or video
- *101 American English* books by Harry Collis
- *Birds of the World*, by Alan Greensmith (DK)
- *Connect Four* game
- Bookkeeping for self, classroom or family
- *Brain Stretchers* books by Carolyn Anderson & Jackie Haller

Memory

Memory is the retention or storage of information - and the ability to recall it when needed. Memory is required to learn any subject that involves memorization of rules, vocabulary, formulas, etc.

- Rummikub games
- Cribbage
- Weather data
- Charades
- *Scattergories* game
- World clock

Evaluation

Evaluation is decision-making - the process used to judge, evaluate, prioritize and analyze. It requires that an individual be able to compare what is to what should be. Evaluation is not often taught in school, but it is critical to most life skills.

- *You Decide!* by Jean Bunnell
- *Whodunit - You Decide*, by Hy Conrad
- Rummy games and software
- *Puzz3D* puzzles and software

Problem-Solving

Problem-Solving is working out the answer to a problem that requires more than mere retrieval from memory. The student is asked to interpret information and derive the accepted correct solution. Problem-Solving is required to learn all school subjects.

- Drawing/designing on graph paper
- *Hijara* board game
- '40' and '50' science books by Jim Wiese
- *Cartoon Guide to Physics*, by Larry Gonick - book or software
- *My Origami & Kirigami Kit*, by Alex Toys
- Riddle books
- *Pre-Algebra Brain Teasers*, by Lorin Olschanski
- *Logical Journey of the Zoombinis* software
- Sewing, knitting, embroidery

Creativity

Creativity is the production of unique or novel information where the emphasis is on variety and quality of output. It requires fluency, flexibility, originality, quality and discipline. There are no predefined correct answers, no rules to follow, so people use their creativity to invent something new. Creativity is not often taught in school, but it is the basis of the movies, music and art that we enjoy, and likewise of prize-winning discoveries in science and medicine.

- *Balderdash* game
- *Teach Your Child How to Think*, by Edward de Bono
- *Steven Caney's Invention Book*
- How-to-draw books
- *Totally Mad* software