

EARLY LEARNING AT HOME

Getting Ready for Kindergarten :Cognitive



PRESCHOOLERS | ages 3-4 years old

Cognitive skills are children's thinking skills, or the ability to learn or solve problems. Arts and crafts can help to develop cognitive skills by giving children opportunities to work on decision making skills, problem solving skills, and visual thinking skills.

Art projects can be a fun way to develop cognitive skills. Children work on problem solving skills by experimenting with a wide range of arts and crafts materials. How will the materials they have selected work together? Decision making is constant and continuous as they assemble and decorate their projects. They are also working on visual thinking skills as they assemble their project. How does one art project work on all these skills? Here's an example of a project that works on all of these skills. You most likely will not need to go out and purchase any materials. You can use what already have around the house.

Craft: Number Creatures

Have your child pick a number. Say your child picks the number three. Using this number, you child will create a creature that has three of everything. Three eyes, three noses, three legs, three mouths, etc..... Your child will be making decisions as they decide what objects to use. Problem solving skills are used as they figure out how to attach materials together. The great thing about this craft is that you can do it over and over again and have a different result each time just by picking a different number.

Here are some other art activities to do at home:

- Make your own memory game: Cut pictures out of magazines to make up pairs of objects that are the same. You can glue them onto paper or card stock to make them a little sturdier. To play, turn all the cards over and take turns turning over two cards at a time to find matching pairs.
- Nature Journal: Make a nature journal out of paper stapled together. Go for walks and collect treasures along the way to add to the journal. This is great for decision making as your child chooses what to put in their journal. Add a story about what your child did on their walk, and you're working on narrative skills. Make one for each season. Then you can talk about the differences between the seasons. Make sure to check out Pinterest for more nature journal ideas.
- Hand Puppets: Make simple hand puppets out of paper bags. Ask how can they make the puppet move? Ask them to tell you about the puppet they are making as they are creating their puppet. And don't forget to put on a puppet show! Not only are you working on decision making skills and problem solving but you'll be working on vocabulary and narrative skills.

Books to Read Aloud:

Ella of Course by Sarah Weeks

Give and Take by Chris Raschka

Wemberly Worried by Kevin Henkes

Would You Rather... by John Burningham

Would You Rather Be a Bullfrog? By Theo Le Sieg