

SUPPORTING CRITICAL THINKING AT HOME

WHAT IS A CRITICAL THINKER?

At Norwalk Public Schools, we define a critical thinker as someone who can logically interpret, analyze, evaluate, and synthesize information and ideas. This skill helps students make informed and thoughtful decisions.

STUDENTS ENGAGE IN CRITICAL THINKING BY...

- Logically interpreting, analyzing, and synthesizing information.
- Evaluating information for accuracy, credibility, and relevance.
- Reflecting on and revising ideas using evidence.

WHY IS CRITICAL THINKING IMPORTANT?

Critical thinking empowers children to think independently, evaluate information, and connect ideas. It helps them make informed decisions and life choices, making them better equipped to face challenges in life, work, and relationships.



HOW CAN I SUPPORT MY CHILD IN DEVELOPING THEIR CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS?

SORTING ACTIVITIES

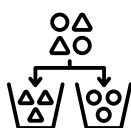
PREK-K

At this stage, children are developing their ability to categorize and organize information. Sorting helps them notice similarities and differences, laying the groundwork for logical reasoning.

Have children sort toys or household items by characteristics like color, shape, or size. Then, discuss the reasoning behind their choices and explore alternative ways to sort the same items.

CONSIDER ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE:

- Which items belong together? How do you know?
- What other items could go together?
- Why do these items NOT belong together?



FINDING PATTERNS

GRADES 1-2

Children in this age group are becoming more aware of patterns and connections in their environment. Identifying patterns helps strengthen their ability to predict and analyze relationships.

Encourage children to look for patterns during everyday activities, like finding shapes in road signs, noticing repetitions in nature, or connecting a TV show to real-life situations.

CONSIDER ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What patterns do you notice?
- Does this remind you of something in real life? How are they similar or different?
- Why do you think this pattern exists?



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THINKING IN NEW AND DIFFERENT WAYS

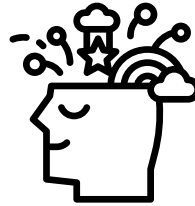
GRADES 3-5

This is a prime time for fostering curiosity and creativity. Encouraging children to brainstorm and evaluate multiple solutions supports flexible thinking and problem-solving.

Present a problem or scenario and challenge your child to come up with different ideas or solutions. For example, try redesigning a household object or brainstorming new ways to organize a room.

CONSIDER ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What other ideas could we try?
- What other solutions could solve this problem?
- How can we improve on this idea?



EXPLORING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

At this stage, children are also continuing to develop empathy and learning to see situations from multiple points of view. This helps them understand others' experiences and strengthens their analytical skills.

Discuss current events, books, or personal experiences. Encourage children to imagine how others might interpret the same situation differently.

CONSIDER ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE:

- How might someone else see this situation?
- What other conclusions could someone draw from this?
- Why do you think they may feel that way?

NAVIGATING COMMUNITY AND GLOBAL CHALLENGES

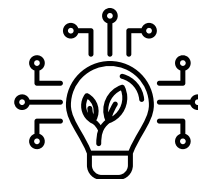
GRADES 6-8

Middle schoolers are beginning to think abstractly and often show a growing interest in fairness, justice, and broader societal issues. Engaging in discussions about global or community challenges helps them develop analytical and problem-solving skills.

Encourage children to explore topics like social justice, local community challenges, or global issues. Discuss these topics together, prompting them to share their opinions and brainstorm actionable solutions.

CONSIDER ASKING QUESTIONS LIKE:

- What do you think is the biggest issue in our community? Why?
- What ideas do you have for solving this problem?
- How can you or others take small steps to make a difference?



PLEASE SCAN THE QR CODE FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT THE
NORWALK PUBLIC SCHOOLS' PORTRAIT OF A GRADUATE.

