

## Fostering Children's Thinking Skills

Narrator: Welcome to this short presentation on Fostering Children's Thinking Skills. Teachers plan activities and interact with children everyday to extend young children's thinking skills. This presentation describes some ways that teachers can do this important work.

Narrator: The National Center on Quality Teaching and Learning uses the house framework to organize the teaching practices that are important for school readiness for all children. This module on Fostering Children's Thinking Skills fits into the foundation of the house. A strong foundation of engaging interactions and environments is crucial to children's school readiness. Teachers have many, many interactions with children every day. By taking advantage of these interactions, teachers can maximize children's learning.

Narrator: What does it mean to foster children's thinking skills? It means that teachers engage in interactions with children that support and guide children's understanding and deepen children's knowledge about their surroundings. In this module, we focus on three methods that teachers can use to foster children's thinking and to help them learn more about their world.

Narrator: One way that teachers advance children's thinking is to lead activities and experiences that provide opportunities to use the scientific method. Teachers can help children use the basic elements of the scientific method. They help children observe carefully. They help children predict or make a good guess about what will happen in the future. And they help children experiment to see whether or not their prediction was accurate.

Narrator: Another way that teachers foster children's thinking is to help children use problem solving. Teachers provide activities and experiences that set the stage for children to brainstorm or think about lots of ideas to plan and then to carry out a plan.

Teacher: Oh, maybe take some journals out from the bottom. That's an idea. Ok, shall we try now?

Children: Yeah.

Teacher: Is it ready? Oh, Max that was the trick. That worked!

Narrator: A third method that teachers can use to foster children's thinking is to help children apply their knowledge. Teachers take note of children's curiosity and interest and then take advantage of their interest to help children connect everyday experiences to their prior knowledge.

Teacher: Brown.

Child: Brown. Green. Brown. Green. Brown.

Teacher: Ah, what comes next?

Child: Green.

Teacher: Oh, Green.

Narrator: There are many opportunities for teachers to foster children's thinking throughout the school day in a variety of activities and routines. Teachers need to be purposeful in their planning, so that these opportunities are productive for children.

Narrator: The three methods that have been described can be used to increase the quality of teacher-child interactions to support learning in the domains of the Head Start framework. This module highlighted the ways that teachers can foster children's thinking. Teachers can plan learning activities and experiences to help children learn to use the scientific method, problem-solve and apply their knowledge. See our longer module on fostering children's thinking for additional tip sheets, guides and resources.

Narrator: Thank you for listening and have fun helping your children learn.