

HELP ME GROW LEARNING CIRCLE

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT (THINKING & LEARNING)

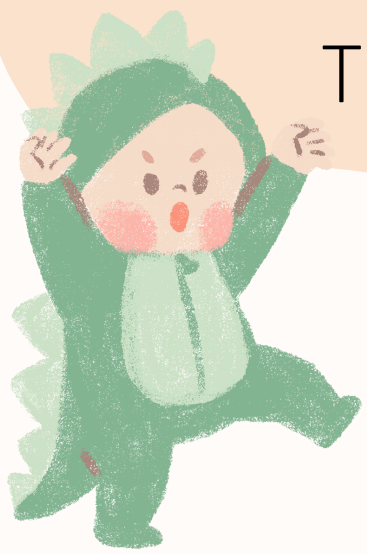


WHAT IS COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT (THINKING & LEARNING)

Cognitive development is how your child's mind grows and learns to figure out the world. It's the process of their brain building a "toolkit" to think, solve problems, remember information and understand the world.

WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE

Figuring out how toys work
Remembering routines
Sorting, matching, counting
Trying again after a mistake



WHY IT MATTERS

Cognitive development is essential during the early years because a child's brain is growing faster than it ever will again, forming over one million new neural connections every second.

STRENGTHENING COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

- **Building a Strong Foundation for School**
 - Cognitive skills like attention, memory, and reasoning are the "building blocks" for all future learning
- **Developing Problem-Solving and Independence**
 - As children's minds develop, they learn how to figure things out on their own
- **Supporting Communication and Relationships**
 - Cognitive growth is closely linked to how children interact with others.



DEVELOPMENTAL SCREENINGS

The Ages & Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) is considered a "gold standard" tool because it relies on the person who knows the child best: you! It typically takes only 10-15 minutes to complete. It lists specific things your child can do, helping you recognize and celebrate their progress. See where your child is at developmentally by scanning the QR code.



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ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



For Infants (Birth to 2 Years)

At this stage, babies learn primarily through their senses and simple interactions.

- **Play Peek-a-Boo:** This classic game teaches object permanence—the idea that people still exist even when they can't be seen.
- **Sensory Exploration:** Give your baby objects with different textures (soft, bumpy, silky) to feel or play with sensory bins filled with safe items like rice or water.
- **Visual Tracking:** Slowly move a rattle or colorful toy from side to side about 8–12 inches from their face to help them practice following objects with their eyes.
- **Sing and Rhyme:** Use repetitive songs like "The Wheels on the Bus" to help them learn patterns and build early memory.

ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT



For Toddlers (2 to 4 Years)

Toddlers are starting to understand how things work and love to solve basic problems.

- **Sorting Games:** Ask them to group items by color, size, or shape. You can use socks from the laundry, colored blocks, or even different types of pasta.
- **Simple Puzzles:** Use age-appropriate puzzles with large pieces. This builds spatial awareness and the "trial and error" thinking needed to solve challenges.
- **Cause-and-Effect Toys:** Provide toys with buttons to push or levers to pull that make something happen, which helps them understand that their actions have results.
- **Interactive Reading:** As you read, leave out a word in a favorite story and let them fill it in, or ask "What happens next?".

ACTIVITIES TO STRENGTHEN COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT

For Preschoolers (4 to 6 Years)

At this age, children use more imagination and begin to follow multi-step directions.

- **Imaginative Play:** Set up a "grocery store" or "doctor's office" with household items. This helps them practice creativity and see things from others' perspectives.
- **Memory Games:** Play card-matching games or "The Missing Item," where you hide one of three objects on a tray and ask them which one is gone.
- **Cooking Together:** Have them help measure, stir, and count ingredients. This introduces early math concepts like volume and sequencing in a fun way.



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