

Encouraging Your Kids To Become Critical Thinkers

Our biggest job as parents is to prepare our offspring for life as happy, fulfilled, and productive adults. One of the best skills we can pass on to our kids and teach them is critical thinking. It will serve them well throughout their later years in school and of course into adulthood. Critical thinking will help them get ahead both in their professional and personal life by enabling them to make smart decisions. Let's take a look at what you can do to encourage your little ones to start practicing critical thinking skills from an early age.

Lead By Example

The best place to start is to lead by example. Make sure you use your critical thinking skills as you work through everyday problems and issues. Explain to your kids what you're doing and how you're coming to the solutions. In short, show your work and let them see – in an age-appropriate way – how critical thinking works in real life.

When they ask questions, answer truthfully and thoroughly, again sharing how you approached the problem and how you used critical thinking to solve it.

Work through Critical Thinking Processes With Them

Next, it's time to let your kids give critical thinking a try of their own. That won't happen while they're young, but as they start to approach middle school, they'll be ready to take part in and work through critical thinking processes with you.

For example, make the kids part of the process of deciding where to go for vacation and show them how to collect and organize data and then make a decision based on that information. The next step will be to make them take the

lead, guiding and pointing out mistakes as they start practicing their critical thinking.

Set High Expectations And Praise A Job Well Done

Last but not least, make critical thinking an expectation in your home as your kids start to develop those skills. Don't let them get away with giving you a gut feeling answer or a guess. Have them show their work or explain their thought process. If you feel that they haven't given it their best effort, make them go back as they work through problems, work on homework, etc. Don't be afraid to set high expectations, but be ready to help and guide as needed.

Praise for a job well done goes a long way to encourage your children to take pride in their critical thinking skills and work on making them lifelong habits.