

Ready for School! To Belong or Not to Belong

Cognitive Development

This area of development focuses on how we retain learned information or knowledge acquired. Through cognitive development, children learn to observe, discover new things, note similarities and differences, solve problems, and ask questions.

The cognitive skills that children gain from everyday experiences are what helps children acquire new knowledge and information. The best environment for learning is created when children have multiple and varied opportunities to interact with their environment.

Children's cognitive development is boosted when they develop skills for keeping track of their own thinking processes. These skills help children think through what to do, and to know whether they are succeeding or when to ask for help. Reflecting on their own thinking helps children become more independent learners.

Cognitive Readiness

To deem a child ready for school in terms of cognitive development, he or she should be able to do some or all of the following:

- Demonstrate a broad understanding of the world in which they live, including their homes, food, bodies.
- Absorb and retain new knowledge.
- Make links to their own experience when reading with the teacher.
- Show an interest in exploring their environment and learning more about nature and science (plants, animals, or weather).
- Participate in simple experiments to learn about science, and reflect on the results.
- Use reflective thinking to consider why things happen and what can be learned from these experiences.
- Express opinions on matters that affect them.
- Make simple decisions on their own, for example, deciding what clothes to wear.
- Use their senses to explore the immediate inside and outside environment.
- Be interested and show willingness to solve problems.
- Participate with others to solve problems and contribute to group outcomes.

- Sort and classify objects according to one or more properties.
- Match things that go together and compare things that are different, using appropriate language.

How to Play?

- Give a copy of the boxes with the stickers to each student.
- Explain to students that they will cut the stickers and paste them in the correct box.
- After completing the activity, take time to review students' results. This activity might be used to test auditory memory as well as logical thinking.
- To reinforce cognitive practice, give them a copy of the second page.
- Explain to students that they will cut the stickers and fill the empty boxes with them according to the category.
- Take time to review students' answers.

Teacher Tips

For further practice, list a number of objects, including one that doesn't belong to the group, for example, newspaper, book, computer, birthday card. Children then say which one doesn't belong and why. There can be more than one correct response — no response is incorrect as long as the children can explain it.

This game encourages children to categorize a group of objects, for example, sock...shoe...shirt... What group do they all belong to? (Clothes) Or you can do the reverse game where you name the category, and the child thinks of as many items that fit.