

NURTURE THEIR THINKING SKILLS

PART 1

Kids are eager to figure out how things work. They're like little scientists, constantly doing experiments, like throwing a ball on the ground to see if it will bounce, and then throwing a doll on the ground to see what it will do. They also learn to use objects as tools – like using a stick or standing on a stool to get an out-of-reach toy. And their growing memory helps them learn too, like when they imitate what they see others do, even hours or days later.

Here are a few ways you can encourage your kids' growing thinking skills.



1



Offer tools for experimenting

This includes toys and objects they can shake, bang, open and close, or take apart to see how they work. Explore with water while taking a bath. Take walks and look for new objects to explore—pine cones, acorns, rocks, and leaves. At the supermarket, talk about what items are hard, soft, big, and small.

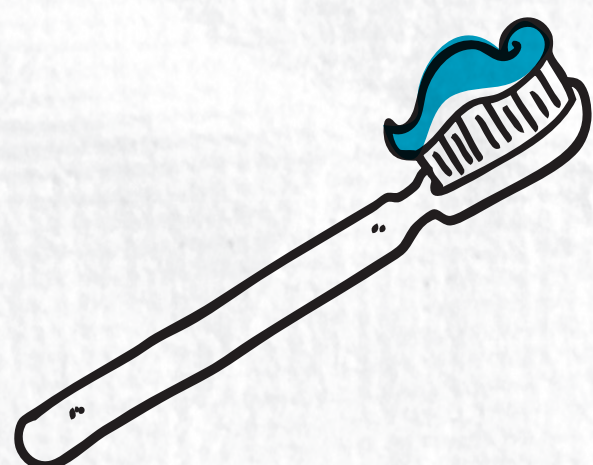
2



Play pretend

When you see them cuddling their stuffed animal, you might say: "Bear loves it when you cuddle him. Do you think he's hungry?" Then bring out some pretend food. These kinds of activities will help build their imagination!

3



Encourage self-care activities

Such as combing hair, brushing teeth, or washing their face. This helps them learn how familiar objects work and solve problems like how to hold the brush.

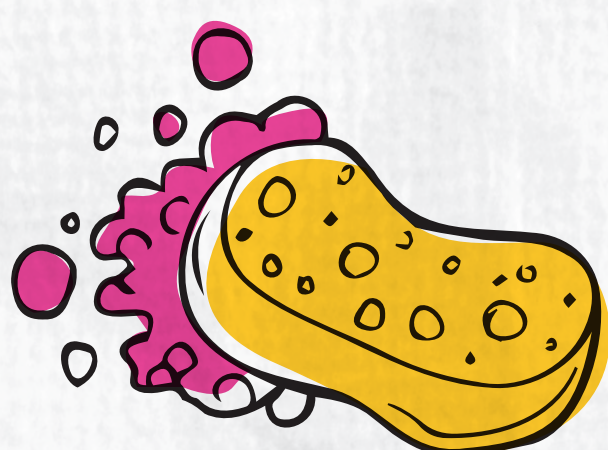
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Offer props

Offer your kids objects to play with that will help them use their imaginations: dress-up clothes, animal figures, dolls, pretend food. And support their problem solving: if they're trying to make a sandcastle but the sand won't stick, show them how to add water but don't make the castle for them. The more they do, the more they learn!

5



Let them help

They can wipe down the counter with a towel or sponge, push a broom or mop, or rake leaves. These activities give them many chances to solve problems.