

Teach Your Kids To Think!

Simple Tools You Can Use Every Day

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That's Good Thinking
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This book is printed on paper that contains 30% post-consumer waste.

*This book is dedicated to my parents, Nell and Everett Chesley,
with love and appreciation.*

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Teach Your Kids To Think!

Why You Should Teach Your Kids to Think

When I was a teacher, I felt if I could just teach kids to think, they could tackle anything. As a teacher of teachers, I realized the importance of empowering educators to teach whole children—the developing social, emotional, creative individuals who will one day live and work in the world outside of school. As a parent, I was glad that I could draw on what I had learned in these roles, but it wasn't enough. I needed resources that I couldn't find, so I started developing them and sharing them with other parents. This book, improved by the suggestions of those helpful parents, is the result.

The purpose of this book is to help you teach your kids to think wisely and well during the time you already spend together.

Life in the 21st century, more than ever before, calls for people who can think in sophisticated ways. Our parenting efforts need to take this into account. Children not only need basic reading and math skills but also the harder-to-define skills of logical and analytical thinking,

Teach Your Kids to Think

resourcefulness, adaptability, and creativity. They have to be able to manage themselves, to work effectively with others, and to learn successfully on the job and throughout their lives. Our children should be proficient at sorting through masses of information to find the relevant and valid pieces, and they will need to be adept at adjusting to change in our world of interconnecting and ever-evolving systems. Moreover, our children will probably hold many jobs as adults, some in fields that haven't been invented yet. Each of those jobs will require learning new processes, skills, and ways of working with groups of people. In short, today's world calls for people who can think well.

This book reflects current research in education and psychology about teaching, learning, and intelligence in a range of areas—analytical, creative, social & emotional, and practical. I have translated this research into what I hope will be easily digestible information and readily usable tools for parents. Our best teachers use tools like these, and you can too. The focus is how your children think as much as what they are thinking about. Put a little differently, it's more about the process of learning than about learning particular subject matter.

Teach Your Kids to Think is intended to allow you to be more confident in your role as a teacher of your child. It is intended to give you an opportunity to step back and perhaps adjust your beliefs about intelligence, learning, and thinking. It is also designed to give you

some tools you can easily use in the course of everyday conversation with your child. It is not intended to create stress for you or your child. We strive to parent in a way that is balanced, positive, and loving. We want to help our children grow into independent, successful adults. We're not out for perfection in our parenting—we'd make ourselves and our kids crazy! But all of us can benefit from taking time to reflect and add tools to our personal parenting practice. It is with this spirit that I hope you will read and use this book.

Teach Your Kids to Think is for parents, guardians, grandparents, caregivers—anyone who is lucky enough to spend quality time with one child or many. Whenever it is used in this book, the term “parents” is meant to be defined broadly. My use of kid/child and kids/children is similarly meant to be interpreted to fit your circumstances. Whether you are raising one, two, or ten children, I am writing for you. If you are raising a child with special needs, you should take those needs into consideration as you, perhaps with your child’s teachers, determine the best ways to use this book.

If you are reading this, you are sure to be a loving, well-intentioned, and motivated parent. *Teach Your Kids to Think* is a springboard for enhancing your parenting. You can help your kids develop critical thinking skills that will help them blossom into fulfilled, responsible adults.

Teach Your Kids to Think

This book is for parents, and parents are busy people. So the first sections are intentionally short, condensed versions of what you need to know before starting to use the simple tools that follow. Three background sections explain these important points:

- **Developing thinking skills helps develop our multiple intelligences.**
- **Parents are well positioned to teach their children thinking skills.**
- **The tools in this book can help parents teach thinking skills.**

Developing thinking skills helps develop our multiple intelligences

Today's experts know some basic things that have profound implications for us as parents:

1. People have multiple types of intelligence. No one number, namely IQ, can adequately represent an individual's intelligence.
2. Intelligences are not fixed at birth and can be developed. The genes we inherit AND our experiences in our environment matter.

3. People who believe that they can develop their intelligences by working hard are likely to do just that.

Each of these important points deserves more explanation.

We have multiple types of intelligence.

Intelligence is not just a high IQ score, or being labeled gifted or talented, or being successful in school. A high IQ does not necessarily lead to a successful life, as judged by society or the individual, or even to success in school. Nor does being successful in school necessarily lead to successful employment or fulfilling relationships with friends or life partners because the intelligences involved in school, employment, and relationships are usually different.

Certainly we see in everyday life that there are many kinds of intelligence. Some of us have amazingly creative minds. Others are incredibly in tune with the people around them. Some use our analytical minds to do very well in school, and others just seem to know how to get along in the world despite not doing well in school. Stop and think of people you know with strengths in these various types of intelligence.