



What Can A Parent Do To Promote Thinking?

"Children grow into the intellectual life around them."

Lev Vygotsky

The skill of inferring means to: Derive meaning from clues, hints and evidence. In literacy, it means to merge background knowledge with clues in the text to come up with an idea that is not explicitly stated by the author.

Ideas and tips for parents for the skill of inferring:

- Paper bag mystery person – Put a few items into a brown paper bag. Tell your child the bag belongs to a certain type of person. Their job is to tell you something about the person. Then, take out each item one by one and talk about it.
 - For example: goggles, a swim cap, a stop watch
- Play twenty questions! This familiar word game helps build inference skills. As our child develops skill with the game, encourage him to avoid asking direct questions like, "Is it a dog?" Rather, encourage him to ask broader questions, "Does it walk on four feet?" Then, when your child figures it out, ask him to tell you the clues that lead to the right answer.
- Make inferences together and then talk about what clues were used to come up with that inference. For example:
 - Sam played outside today. How can we tell? Muddy shoes, jump rope on front porch, water bottle out.
 - Dad seems tired tonight. How can we tell? He's rubbing his eyes, he's on the couch, he was yawning at the dinner table.

Books that support the application of this skill:

- What Do You Do with a Tail Like This? – Steve Jenkins



- Clear illustrations of tails (and other parts such as noses and mouths) are presented with a question that is answered with a page turn that presents the animal in full along with a brief explanation. This informative book introduces animals and actively encourages young readers to infer what tail (or nose, or ...) belongs to whom, as well as its possible uses.

- Pancakes for Breakfast



- A little old lady goes about finding the ingredients needed to make pancakes. Not only is there potential to infer how she feels when she encounters challenges, there is the possibility of science and math (kitchen chemistry and following a recipe) in this classic.

- Chalk – Bill Thompson



- Join three children who find a magical piece of chalk that begins an exciting series of events to figure out "what next."

Questions that a parent can ask his/her child to reinforce this skill:

- What is your inference?
- What information did you use to make the inference?
- What do you think the author wants you to know or learn at this point in the text?
- What did the author mean by _____?