



**ZERO TO THREE**  
Early connections last a lifetime

# Magic of Everyday Moments: Driven to Discover

Have you ever noticed your child watch a truck driving by or pick up a ladybug? That is an example of how your child develops thinking skills. Young children develop thinking skills—such as understanding cause and effect and developing the ability to reason—by exploring and learning how things fit together. They use their senses to learn, and they also need the support of a caring adult to describe and encourage their exploration and curiosity. As you talk to your child, you are also supporting your child's ability to learn other languages later in life. Through loving, nurturing relationships, children feel comfortable exploring their environments, deepening their understanding of how the world works. Consider the following strategies to support your child's curiosity and encourage your child's discovery.

## **Promote curiosity and exploration by allowing your child to discover what your child sees and does:**

- Describe the quantity, weight, and shape of objects using descriptive words such as, *big, small, in, out, more, less, heavy, light, round, or squared*.
- Your child learns that actions produce a response when he lets go of an item and you pick it up for him. He is learning cause and effect and might be thinking, "If I drop this rattle, somebody will pick it up."

## **Stimulate experimentation using items found at home:**

- Your child can use pots, lids, or plastic containers and practice putting one inside the other.
- Provide objects that your child can rip or bang in order to explore how they work.
- Remember to include your child's grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins during play time.

## **Facilitate the development of problem-solving skills and persistence:**

- Provide only the necessary help to allow your child to solve difficult tasks. For example, stay close when your child is putting on her shoes but do not take over when you observe her struggling.



- Offer to help, and allow your child to seek your help comfortably when he needs it.
- Encourage your child to keep trying and not give up when she performs a challenging activity or struggles building a tower of blocks.

## **Encourage imaginary play:**

- Offer boxes, old clothing, and everyday objects that you no longer use for your child to practice pretend play with other children.
- Inspire your child to pretend that an old box is a new car to build symbolic thinking.

The support that you provide your child facilitates early learning and the development of thinking skills. Early experiences that promote wonder, discovery, experimentation, problem solving, and persistence further encourage the development of these skills. Share your ideas, questions, and feelings about the development of thinking skills and the Magic of Everyday Moments video, ***Driven to Discover: How Thinking Skills Develop Through Everyday Play and Exploration*** with another parent or person you trust with these discussion starters:

- Think about something new that you learned. How did it feel to learn something new? How do you think your child feels when he learns something new?
- How do you currently support your child's development of thinking skills? What new strategy will you implement to further support these skills?
- What household items can you give your child to play with? Plastic containers, boxes?
- What type of play does your child enjoy most? How can you tell?
- How do you show your child that you understand what she communicates to you?



### Additional Resources:

- Your Baby's Development: Birth to 3 Months, 3 to 6 Months, 6 to 9 Months, 9 to 12 Months, 12 to 15 Months, 15 to 18 Months, 18 to 24 Months, 24 to 30 Months, 30 to 36 Months  
[www.zerotothree.org/resources/200-driven-to-discover-how-thinking-skills-develop-through-everyday-play-and-exploration](http://www.zerotothree.org/resources/200-driven-to-discover-how-thinking-skills-develop-through-everyday-play-and-exploration)
- News You Can Use: Foundations of School Readiness: Cognition and General Knowledge  
[eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-cognition.pdf](http://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/hslc/tta-system/ehsnrc/docs/nycu-cognition.pdf)