

# Ready to Succeed

An Early Literacy and School Readiness Newsletter for Professionals

## Do Children Know They Are Thinking?

Listen closely to the words children use. As young as three years old they are using words like "think" and "know."

After age three children have an awareness of their ability to think of things, and an awareness of the different kinds of knowledge such as - knowing, pretending, and remembering.

A way to help young children become better at representing thoughts is to provide them with tasks that draw attention to the process used to analyze things. When a child is performing tasks where things must be ordered or categorized, ask why they are making each decision on where to put things. This is a way to enhance the child's problem solving abilities. To expand their skills, children need activities where there are several possibilities on how to arrange things. The child needs opportunities to reason and make their own decisions. Activities like putting away toys, sorting blocks, or organizing crayons into groups are opportunities to engage a

child. All children will not organize the same way. Some may sort by color, others by size, others by use - there is no right or wrong answer. If you ask the child to explain, you might be fascinated to see how complex the child's processing can be.

Although surprisingly advanced, preschoolers' grasp of the way thinking works is far from complete. For example, preschoolers do not realize that the meaning of words like "know" or "remember" depend on people's certainty about knowledge. Children below age five often believe that if you get an answer right you must have "known" or "remembered" it, but if you get it wrong then you must have "guessed" or "forgot." Young children often believe that others know what they do. To illustrate this, show a child a crayon box and ask a child what is in the box. Inevitably they'll say, "Crayons". Open the box and show them that there are ribbons inside. Close the box again and

ask the child, "What will your friend say is in the box?" The child will say, "Ribbons." Notice, the preschooler does not realize that their friend has no way of knowing that there are ribbons in the box and not crayons. The child thinks that if they know there are ribbons in the box, others will know it too.

So the next time one of your preschoolers insists they know something incorrect is true, rather than arguing with them and becoming red in the face when you get a series of "yes huhs," just reinforce what is correct. For example, to the statement, "Bats are big birds," you could say, "You're right, a bat is sort of like a bird because they both have wings." This "know-it-all" phase is usually over by the time they're five years old. Instead of saying, "I know," children start saying, "I think." This represents another shift in the child's ability to represent their own thoughts.

by Juli Raskauskas

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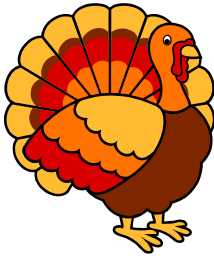
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# "How to Cook a Turkey"



This activity was always one of my favorites! I would typically start around the beginning of November. Armed with pen and paper, call the children over to you one at a time. I would tell the child that I was having my big, huge family over for Thanksgiving (or a big family meal). I had to make all the food, including the turkey! I would explain that I had never made a turkey before and needed their



advise. What should I do!?

Record their responses and turn it into a recipe book to give to parents. The children's responses were always humorous - everything from hunting for it yourself, to zappin' it in the microwave for ten seconds on "really hot." This is sure to be a crowd favorite that will create some fond memories.

Here are a few of my all-time favorites:

"Get it at the store. Wash it and get all the hairs off. Then put it on the stove for

about 5 minutes." ~ Dana

"Go to the woods where they live and catch one. Cut the feathers off and cook it 'til it's REALLY hot." ~ Sean

"Have your mom help you!" ~ Mikayla

"Put it in a oven that's a little bit hot and a little bit cold until it's done." ~ Paul

"Feed it lots of corn so it gets really fat. Pull the feathers off. Wash it and get all the germs off. Put it in the oven for about an hour." ~ Jonna

"Aren't you big enough to know this already?" ~ Rick

## Holiday Books to Read With Children



### Veteran's Day

- Veterans' Day*  
by Mir Tamim Ansary
- Veteran's Day*  
by Jacqueline S. Cotton
- Veteran's Day Remembering Our War Heroes*  
by Elaine Landau
- What is Veteran's Day?*  
by Margot Parker
- Veteran's Day*  
by Lynda Sorensen



### Thanksgiving

- "Twas the Night Before Thanksgiving*  
by Dav Pilkey
- Thanksgiving Day*  
by Anne Rockwell
- A Turkey for Thanksgiving*  
by Eve Bunting
- Thanksgiving at the Tappleton's*  
by Eileen Spinelli
- I Know an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Pie*  
by Alison Jackson

*Don't Eat Too Much Turkey*  
by Miriam Cohen



### Hanukkah

- Hanukkah Lights, Hanukkah Nights*  
by Leslie Kimmelman
- On Hanukkah*  
by Cathy Fishman
- Latkes and Applesauce: A Hanukkah Story*  
by Fran Manushkin
- In the Month of Kislev: A Story for Hanukkah*  
by Nina Jaffe
- A Hanukkah Treasury*  
by Eric A. Kimmel
- Snow in Jerusalem*  
by Deborah Da Costa



### Christmas

- Wake Up Bear...It's Christmas*  
by Stephen Gammell
- Christmas Magic*

- by Patricia Hermes
- A Houseful of Christmas*  
by Barbara M. Joosse
- A Christmas for Chabelita*  
by Argentina Palacios
- Mrs. Santa Claus*  
by Penny Ives
- The Jolly Christmas Postman*  
by Janet and Allan Ahlberg



### Kwanzaa

- Imani's Gift at Kwanzaa*  
by Denise Burden-Patmon
- Kwanzaa*  
by A.P. Porter
- The Gifts of Kwanzaa*  
by Synthia Saint James
- Seven Candles for Kwanzaa*  
by Andrea Davis Pinkney, et al
- A Very Special Kwanzaa*  
by Debi Chocolate
- Kwanzaa*  
by Dana Meachen Rau

For a more extensive list of holiday books, be sure to visit the Ready to Succeed web pages:  
<http://ceplacer.ucdavis.edu>. (no www)

# Bilingual Seasonal Songs

## The Pumpkin

Sung to: *Frere Jacques*

Calabaza, calabaza, (kah-la-BAH-sa)  
Pumpkin, pumpkin.  
Hacemos un pastel, (ahs-EM-ohs oon paust-ELL)  
We'll make a pie,  
A pumpkin pie.  
A pumpkin pie.

## Gobble, Gobble

Sung to: *Sing a Song of Sixpence*

La canción del pavo, (la-kawn-see-OWN del PAUVE-oh)  
Vamos a cantar. (VAH-moce ah kawn-TAR)  
We're going to sing  
The turkey song.  
Oigam al pavito, (OY-gahn el apuve-EE-toe)  
Cantando su canción: (kawn-TAHN-do soo kawn-see- OWN)  
¡Gobble, gobble, gobble, gobble,  
Gobble, gobble, ooo!

## The Candles Shine

Sung to: *Alouette*

Las candelas, (loss kawn-DAY-loss)  
Las candelas, ocho. (loss kawn-DAY-loss, OH-cho)  
Eight Candles,  
All in a line.  
Las candelas, (loss kawn-DAY-loss)  
Brillan las candelas. (BREE-yahn loss kawn-DAY-loss)  
Shining candles,  
It's Hanukkah time!

## Let's All Trim the Tree

Sung to: *I've Been Working on the Railroad*

Adornemos el arbolito, (ah-dore-NE-moce el ar-bo-LEE-toe)  
Let's all trim the tree.  
Hay que poner las luces, (I kay po-NAIR loss LOO-saice)  
For everyone to see.  
El pinito bonito, (el pee-NEE-toe bo-NEE-toe)  
The pretty pine tree.  
Adornemos el arbolito, (ah-dore-NE-moce el ar-bo-LEE-toe)  
Let's all trim the tree.

## Play is Children's Work

Preschoolers are learning an enormous amount of information and skills that contribute to their overall development. Much of this learning is through “play.” Play is natural for children and so important that some refer to play as children’s work. Play can help preschoolers learn how to create, explore, solve problems, and

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begin to understand the concepts and skills they’ll need to be successful students and adults.

Play has many forms and numerous benefits. Following are several ways that play contributes to young children’s development (*Faber and Ward, 1997*).

● **Emotional Development** – Play is a way to overcome emotional childhood anxieties and stresses.

Dramatic and pretend play can help a child work through fears and conflicts by pretending to be someone else.

● **Self-Esteem** – Play is fun! When a child is having fun, she feels good about herself. Children who are activity engaged in fun play develop a positive view of their environment, the people around them, and themselves.

● **Motor Abilities** – There are many benefits to physical play. Active children doing playful activities are building both large and small muscles and coordination.

● **Intellectual Development** – Play can be an emotional buffer for many ordinary real world



consequences. Children can experiment, make mistakes, and work on mastery of a skill without many of the pressures or putdowns that may occur in other less playful settings. This builds children’s problem solving abilities and intellectual development.

● **Communication and Social Skills** – Play, even in infancy, encourages communication. Think of an infant or

toddler playing peek-a-boo or patty cake. Even if they don’t yet have verbal skills, they are communicating their pleasure and joy in the experience. As children grow older, play uses more and more social skills. Children learn to speak, listen, and communicate through these experiences.



## Ready to Succeed

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Serving Placer County  
Since 1917



### CFC's Outcome Faire September 21, 2002

Ta-dah! Making a placemat to go  
with the story *Biscuit's Picnic*."

June Stewart and granddaughter,  
Lydia enjoyed reading camping  
stories together. →



### Family Fun at Community Events

Watch for Ready to Succeed at  
an event near you!



**Health and Safety Faire**  
**October 4, 2002**  
The children made  
Stand Up Scarecrows.

**Sharon K. Junge**  
County Director

**Paula R. Anderson**  
Program Representative

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