



Critical Thinking at Home VroomTip™ Collection

Catch Me if You Can (0-12 months)

Vroom Tip: When you're folding laundry, take long socks and dangle them above your child's head. Encourage them to try and capture the toes of the socks! As they move their arms up and down to reach the socks, you can say, "Up!" and "Down!" to describe their actions.

Brainy Background: When you play this game, your child is learning new words as they listen to you describe what they're doing. They're also introduced to important concepts like up and down through their senses.

Drop the Ball (6-12 months)

Vroom Tip: A fun outside game is "Drop the Ball." Give your child a safe object to hold onto and drop, like a ball or a crumbled piece of paper. If you pick it up, they will drop it again. "Down it falls. Up it comes." Keep up the game with new objects!

Brainy Background: Building your child's ability to use their hands is important. They will use this ability at home, at play, and at school. In addition, they're learning to pay attention and to have self-control—also key skills for life.

Stair Count (15 months – 2 years)

Vroom Tip: When your child is learning to walk up and down stairs, hold their hand, and count each step you take. This helps them become familiar with their numbers and it's fun!

Brainy Background: Making connections between numbers and what they stand for (such as the steps your child climbs or the fingers on their hands), helps your child see that numbers aren't just words they memorize. They actually stand for quantities of things. This is the first step in learning math.

Snacktime Challenge (18 months – 2 years)

Vroom Tip: Drop a small snack inside an empty clear plastic bottle. Encourage your child to get the piece out of the bottle. Do they shake the bottle or put their fingers inside? Can they try in different ways. If they're struggling ask, "What would happen if you turned it upside down?"

Brainy Background: You're helping to build your child's critical thinking and problem-solving skills when you encourage them to test out ideas and come up with answers on their own. By talking with them about what they're doing, you help them to understand the world.

Practice Makes Perfect (2-4 years)

Vroom Tip: Do you and your child have a daily challenge, like getting ready for school? Have them practice that challenge during playtime. You can say: "Let's pretend we're getting ready to go to school. What should we do first?" Talk about the steps if they need help remembering. "We eat our breakfast, pack our lunch, brush our teeth, and then get on the bus."

Brainy Background: When children have the chance to practice something, they begin to feel a sense of control in challenging situations. They're practicing critical thinking and problem-solving skills as they break the task down into steps and apply what they already know to solve it.

Napkin Folds (3-5 years)

Vroom Tip: When you set the table for a meal, encourage your child to think of different ways to fold napkins or paper towels to make different shapes and sizes. You might say, "What shapes can you make?" "What does this shape look like?" "What would happen if you kept folding the corners down?"

Brainy Background: Your child is thinking about a familiar thing—a napkin—in new ways as they fold. Having a back-and-forth conversation about what they're doing promotes curiosity. It also helps them connect shapes and what they look like. The conversation helps develop creativity and critical thinking, all skills they'll need later in life.

What Floats? (4-5 years)

Vroom Tip: Are you near water? Even a big puddle works. Grab some rocks, sticks, or leaves and toss them in one at a time. Do they float or sink? Talk back and forth about how things like shapes or size may make a difference. Keep trying new things and test your ideas. What other experiments can you do together like this?

Brainy Background: This game helps your child learn to think like a scientist. This kind of thinking helps them focus on understanding what they see, and make guesses based on that. Thinking-in-action like this helps them figure out if something is true or false, or even something in between.

Counting Cars (4 – 5 years)

Vroom Tip: Before you go out, ask your child what color of car they think is the most popular. Invite them to count how many cars of that color they see along the way. At the same time, you look for a different color and keep track too. Then talk about what you found out together.

Brainy Background: Your child is using critical thinking to do this, just like a scientist. They first come up with an idea (the popular car color) and then they test it out (counting the cars). They must use their memory to keep track of the number of cars and focus to tune out distractions.

Sign Game (4-5 years)

Vroom Tip: When you're out and about, point out simple signs and ask your child what they think they mean. If they get it wrong, remind them it's a good try, and ask them to keep trying. Point out clues! (There is a barber inside, so the sign says "Haircuts").

Brainy Background: Helping your child look for clues about what words mean is an important step in learning to read, write, and communicate, as well as developing critical thinking skills.