



## Partners in Learning

### What is Spatial Thinking and Why Does It Matter?

Spatial thinking refers to a variety of skills related to the shape, location and movement of objects. You use spatial thinking when you follow a map, pack the trunk of a car, or follow diagrams for assembling furniture. Young children who are good at spatial thinking tend to have good early math skills. Strong spatial reasoning skills have been linked to later success in math, science, technology and engineering courses. These important skills can be practiced and improved at any age.



How can parents help their children to think spatially?



#### Play with puzzles

Working on a puzzle together is not only a fun, interactive activity; it can also promote the development of spatial thinking skills. Playing with puzzles can help your child think positively about challenges and develop persistence in completing tasks, and the time spent together is an added benefit!

#### Play with blocks and other building toys

While playing, encourage your child to build with a purpose in mind, such as creating a bridge that can span a set distance. Involve him or her in discussions about what building materials would be the most suitable for the project, and why. Block play can help children explore concepts such as quantity, size, shape, and symmetry.



#### Talk about space and spatial relationships

There are plenty of opportunities to have conversations that contribute to spatial thinking. Use vocabulary related to size, number, direction and shape, and make comparisons between objects. Discuss the spatial properties of toys using words like long, wide, thin and straight. Talk with your child about the spatial understanding required for regular household tasks, such as choosing the right container to store leftovers or fitting items into a drawer. If your child is familiar with vocabulary related to spatial thinking, he or she will be able to more effectively share and discuss ideas and observations.

Source: [Science of Learning Institute](#)