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Out of sight Out of mind



The Power of Critical Thinking in Your Child's Education

In today's rapidly changing world, it's not enough for children to simply memorise facts and figures. Critical thinking is a skill that empowers individuals to analyse, evaluate, and solve complex problems. In this article, we explore what critical thinking is and why parents have a role to play. Encouraging our children to learn this skill, will not only keep them safe online but it will also ensure they grow to be well rounded individuals.

"Because I said so"

The name of our blog "Out of Sight out of Mind" is a modern-day twist on the saying "Children Should be Seen and Not Heard". When writing this article, it reminded us of how expressions such as "Because I said so" do not help to create an environment where questions are welcomed and encouraged. The key is exploring the questions children ask rather than providing a quick answer.

What Is Critical Thinking?

The Oxford English Dictionary defines critical thinking as "the objective, systematic, and rational analysis and evaluation of factual evidence in order to form a judgement on a subject, issue, etc." It is more than just thinking deeply about a subject. It is a cognitive skill that involves asking wide range of relevant questions to work out if something is a fact/fake or right/wrong. It's the importance of incorporating analysis before jumping to a conclusion. Educating our children with the skills to do this allows them to apply critical thinking as a thought process in any situation that requires a decision.

Analysing Information:

The ability to examine information, concepts, or situations from different angles.

Evaluating Evidence:

Assessing the credibility and reliability of information and sources.

Problem-Solving:

Finding creative and effective solutions to challenges.

Open-Mindedness:

Being receptive to new ideas and perspectives.

Making Informed Decisions:

Drawing well-reasoned conclusions based on available information.

Critical thinking and AI:

Our previous article, [issue 8 of #OOSOOM](#) explores how AI can be used to manipulate and groom children online and why critical thinking is so important, when something does not feel quite right.

AI continues to develop and grow in power and the recent deepfake scam reported by the BBC is an example on how AI can be used to manipulate. In this case, the influencer MrBeast appeared on TikTok offering the new iPhones for \$2. The scammers used AI to make a video with MrBeast's face and body so the consumer believed this to be a trusted source. [Select here to read more....](#)

Another example is where AI has been used to change football player(s) profiles. The original footballer is female however AI has changed their features to a male counterpart. This VT is a great way to introduce your children to the power of AI and the importance of critical thinking. [Select here to watch the VT....](#)

Each of these examples can be used in conversations with our children as relevant resources to help encourage them to question their understanding and reasoning of what they have seen.

What Are The Benefits to Critical Thinking?

Independent Learning

Children who can think critically are better at self-directed learning. They become curious, eager to explore new subjects, and skilled at finding answers on their own.

Effective Communication

Critical thinkers are better communicators. They can express their ideas clearly, listen actively, and engage in meaningful discussions.

Resilience

Teaching critical thinking helps children become more resilient. They learn to adapt to changing circumstances and bounce back from setbacks.

How Can We Encourage Critical Thinking?

Problem Solving

Engage your child in problem-solving activities and puzzles. Critical thinking enables children to approach these challenges with confidence, breaking them down into manageable parts and finding effective solutions.

Different Perspectives

Encourage your child to consider different views, both in everyday and real-world issues. Discuss them together and encourage your child to think about the ethical implications of the actions taken.

Reading

Encourage reading. Discuss books, articles, films, social media and online content together to help your child analyse it critically.

In Summary

We have the opportunity and responsibility to encourage critical thinking skills in our children, ensuring they have the knowledge and understanding that not everything they hear, see and read online is real. By nurturing this skill in our children, we equip them to question what is right/wrong and fact/fake.

By being a role model, we can demonstrate our own decision-making processes and also convey how we consider different perspectives. By exploring different scenarios together and finding the solution(s) together, we can equip children to make better decisions both online and offline; whether it's choosing friends, academic/career paths or making ethical choices. It will help them to weigh up the pros and cons, to consider the consequences, and make informed choices.



Out of sight, out of mind