



# PARENT

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# PERSPECTIVES

This edition of Parent Perspectives comes from our Wisconsin affiliate. Affiliate Director, Lynne Buckmaster, gives us some excellent tools and strategies to increase creative thinking. We hope these activities are beneficial to your students. Please enjoy!

## FPS “Home” Work

The process used in Future Problem Solving is a powerful strategy that will serve your children well throughout their lives. It allows them to analyze a situation and arrive at challenges and solutions to address it by thinking both creatively and critically. This edition will introduce you to some ideas for how you and your children can use the Creative Problem Solving (CPS) process at home in ways you might not have imagined. Good luck and have fun with your problem-solving activities!

Here’s what some of the experts say about **creative thinking** . . .

*“Creative thinking makes us more mentally active, curious, optimistic, and inventive.”*

*Swarnakshi Sharma*

*“Creative thinkers are in high demand in the job market, and creative thinking is one of the key skills needed in future jobs according to a recent survey by the World Economic Forum.”*

*Rawzaba Alhalabi*

*“Thinking creatively makes you a better problem-solver, which has far-reaching benefits in both your work and personal life.”*

*Maggie Wooll*

*“Thinking creatively removes the limits and boundaries from how processes and procedures currently operate, encouraging people to continue searching for alternative ways to complete tasks or think about concepts.”*

*Indeed Editorial Team*

*August 26, 2021*



# Brainstorming—a great way to begin!

**Brainstorming** is a creative thinking technique you've probably heard of. However, there are specific rules for this tool that many often neglect. The rules are important because they help you better achieve the primary goal of brainstorming -- to get as many ideas as possible. The more ideas you have, the more you have to choose from, thus the more likely you are to arrive at quality alternatives! The following chart shows each rule and explains how adhering to it helps you reach the goal of coming up with as many ideas as possible.

## Brainstorming Rules

- ⇒ **Say your idea out loud.** This allows everyone to hear the idea and “hitchhike” or “piggyback” on it, giving you even more ideas.
- ⇒ **No comments or discussion.** This gets people off track. All you should hear is idea, after idea, after idea.
- ⇒ **No criticism or praise, verbal or nonverbal.** This can stop someone from offering further ideas. Evaluation/discussion of your list of ideas comes AFTER the brainstorming session is over.
- ⇒ **Wild and crazy ideas are okay!** Sometimes a wild or crazy idea can be tweaked to become a viable idea.
- ⇒ **Don't worry about repeats.** Take care of those when you're finished brainstorming.

## Things to brainstorm!

- What to do on a rainy weekend
- Places to go for less than \$50
- Ways to reorganize the household
- Solutions to a problem in the news
- What the world needs is . . .
- Ways to improve your storage spaces
- Ways to have an unusual family experience
- Alternative uses for empty tin cans

- Brainstorming can help you think of ideas as you study each new topic
- Brainstorming is key to help you think of ideas for Step 1 Challenges
- Brainstorming is a perfect tool to create Step 3 Solutions
- Brainstorming is an excellent tool to elaborate your Step 6 Action Plan
- Brainstorming is an awesome way to get to know your team's strengths!



**Turn your brain on as you Problem Solve!**

## Another Creative Thinking Tool...

A great creative thinking tool for getting a variety of ideas is the **Morphological Matrix**. Here's how:

1. Identify the attributes of something.
2. Brainstorm different possibilities for each of those attributes.
3. Mix and match for new possibilities!

For example, let's invent a new sandwich possibility. We'll identify the attributes as a holder, fillers, add-ons, and spreads/sauces.

Holders	Fillers	Add-Ons	Spreads/Sauces
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pita bread</li> <li>• whole wheat roll</li> <li>• English muffin</li> <li>• onion bagel</li> <li>• zucchini bread</li> <li>• waffles</li> <li>• graham crackers</li> <li>• big cookies</li> <li>• lefsa</li> <li>• pizza crust</li> <li>• banana bread</li> <li>• French bread</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• peanut butter</li> <li>• tuna</li> <li>• roast beef</li> <li>• meatballs</li> <li>• ham</li> <li>• hot dog</li> <li>• bacon</li> <li>• pastrami</li> <li>• egg salad</li> <li>• fish fillet</li> <li>• Italian sausage</li> <li>• scallops</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• lettuce</li> <li>• cheese</li> <li>• olives</li> <li>• marshmallows</li> <li>• potato chips</li> <li>• chocolate bar</li> <li>• apple slices</li> <li>• peas</li> <li>• ice cream</li> <li>• mushrooms</li> <li>• anchovies</li> <li>• cole slaw</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• horseradish</li> <li>• Dijon mustard</li> <li>• mayo</li> <li>• honey</li> <li>• cream cheese</li> <li>• fudge</li> <li>• caramel</li> <li>• guacamole</li> <li>• cranberry relish</li> <li>• hollandaise sauce</li> <li>• yogurt</li> <li>• tobacco sauce</li> </ul>

Two new sandwich possibilities include:

1. Peanut butter, apple slices, and caramel on banana bread
2. Bacon, potato chips, and honey on an onion bagel

The chart above represents only a fraction of the possible combinations. Think of both usual and unusual components in your brainstormed lists. Choose one or two from each column for new and tasty possibilities!

Try using a **Morphological Matrix at home!**

Ways to improve . . .	Using the attributes of . . .
family dinners	salads, entrees, side dishes, desserts
a bedroom	sleeping, studying, "hanging/relaxing", other
how to remodel the family room	who, what, how

Here's what some of the experts say about **critical thinking** . . .

*" . . . the more critical thinking is addressed in a course, the more we prepare students not to fall into the misinformation trap."*

Dr. Nickolas Domiello

*"Applying critical thinking helps you make decisions that require a lot of thought. [It] encourages you to research and favor objective logic over your initial emotional response."*

Indeed Editorial Team  
February 22, 2021

*"Critical thinking plays a crucial role in evaluating new ideas, selecting the best ones, and modifying them if necessary."*

S.M. Rayhanul Islam

*"Critical thinkers make the best decisions most often. And in the workplace, where choices about how to complete tasks, communicate information, relate with coworkers and develop strategy are so common, critical thinkers are extremely valuable."*

Performance  
Management  
Consultants



**Criteria** are “measuring sticks” that help you think critically to decide how well something meets a particular goal. You use criteria all the time! For example, if your goal is to purchase a new car, you might determine that cost, national ranking, design, comfort, and gas mileage are your most important considerations. In FPS, we state each criterion using a superlative in order to rank solutions on a continuum from best to worst. For example:

1. Which car will best fit into my budget?
2. Which car has the best ranking from the experts?
3. Which car is the most visually appealing?
4. Which car is most comfortable?
5. Which car gets the best city gas mileage?

**The evaluation matrix (grid)** is used to list final solutions and rank them according to each criterion separately. Because there are 5 options, the one that best meets the criterion gets a 5; the one that next best meets the criterion gets a 4; and so on:

Options	Criteria					TOTAL
	1	2	3	4	5	
Honda Civic	3	5	5	5	2	20
Kia Forte	5	4	2	1	1	13
Volkswagen Golf	2	3	3	3	3	14
Chevrolet Bolt	1	2	1	2	5	11
Toyota Corolla	4	1	4	4	4	17



If you truly choose the most important criteria, and if you do the grid correctly, the option with the highest total WILL BE your best overall solution! This is a great decision-making tool!

**Try doing a grid** for any decision you have to make as a family. You can practice by choosing ideas from any brainstormed list (like the ones mentioned in the brainstorming section) or for real decisions you have to make (like which college to apply for or attend). Identify 5 important criteria, then using the grid to rank ideas one criterion at a time. It's best to limit your solutions to 10 at the most. Adjust your rankings accordingly (e.g., if you have 8 solutions, they will be ranked from 8 to 1; with 6 solutions you'll rank them 6 to 1; and so on).

## WHY IS FPS SO IMPORTANT FOR YOUR CHILDREN?

FPS has taught me how to think critically and resolve problems, which are some of the most important things I have ever learned.

I've learned how to effectively come up with ways to solve a problem with the most efficient problem solving strategies that can be applied anywhere in life.

FPS Students

Many want to skip to the solution, but FPS teaches identification of the issue before getting to the solution - don't we as a society need these instilled and have these types of people at the forefront?

This program puts kids in a position to succeed by focusing on the process to get there.

FPS Parents

FPS promotes "outside-the-box" thinking -- looking at problems from different angles. It pushes students to adopt a growth mindset over a fixed mindset.

There is not one correct answer -- it pushes beyond rote memorization or recall in a way very few classes and programs do.

FPS Teachers

FPS both liberated and restrained my imagination, helping me to develop what might be called a "disciplined creativity".

One of the main benefits FPS gave me is the ability to think critically about different issues. I have to figure out what information I need in order to solve some of the problems I see on a daily basis.

FPS Alumni

### Cultural Corner -- Wisconsin!

We introduced you to Wisconsin in the October issue, but here are some more things you may not know about our great state:

- The term "cheesehead" actually started as a term the German soldiers used to insult the Dutch during WWII. These days, the term is used in a bit more endearing way to describe cheese-lovin' Wisconsinites. The first cheesehead was worn at a Brewers game and was a couch cushion with holes burned in the foam and painted yellow.
- Marathon County produces nearly all of the ginseng grown in the U.S. and about 10% of the world's supply. There's even an international festival in September that gives an up-close look at the process and a chance to taste foods and drinks incorporating the product.
- Famous people from Wisconsin: Harry Houdini, Frank Lloyd Wright, Chris Farley, Georgia O'Keefe, Orson Wells, Laura Ingalls Wilder, Liberace, Mark Ruffalo, and Les Paul.
- Soviet satellite Sputnik IV fell out of orbit in 1962 and while most of it burned up on re-entry, a 20-pound piece of debris crashed to the ground in Manitowoc. The original piece of Sputnik was returned to the Soviets but the Rahr-West Art Museum has a replica of it on display, and Manitowoc celebrates Sputnikfest each September.
- Wisconsin produces 60% of the nation's cranberries.

<https://www.travelwisconsin.com/stories/post/20-things-you-may-not-have-known-about-wisconsin/>



**Lynne Buckmaster,**  
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