



# MACARTHUR CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENTAL CLINIC

## Supporting Your Child's Inference Skills



### What is inferencing?



An inference is an idea or conclusion we draw from information which may not be specifically stated or presented in an obvious way. Drawing inferences from the world around us is an important social skill. For example, judging how your friend is feeling based on their facial expression and tone of voice or, understanding and telling jokes with friends. The ability to infer information is also important in helping us understand what we read. For example, understanding how a character is feeling or why they acted in a certain way when the author has not specifically told us. Making an inference is like being a detective, we use clues from what we see or have read, and relate them to our background knowledge or our personal experiences to come to our conclusion.

### Activities to support your school aged child's inference skills



- ❖ When reading with your child, use "think aloud" strategies to model how **you** infer information. For example, if reading the line "Mary's eight children waited impatiently for their lunches to be made ready for school." A possible "think aloud" could be, "*Wow, eight children! Imagine what their house would be like with eight children. Mary must need to rush around to make all of those lunches in time for school.*"

- ❖ Engage in discussion whilst book reading using "self-questioning" techniques. For example, *"what do we already know about this topic?"*, *"what does this tell us about how they are feeling?"* or *"why do you think he did that?"*
- ❖ Don't limit your reading activities to books alone. Other texts such as comic strips provide great opportunity to practise inferring meaning and understanding humour with the aid of pictures. This is particularly helpful for children who may not be ready to read a larger amount of written text or who are just beginning to practise the art of inference.
- ❖ Create an "about me" bag or book with your child. Write, draw or find pictures of items that can be used as "hints" for someone to guess (or infer) the things your child likes to do. For example, a cookbook may mean they like to cook. You might also like to create a bag or book for yourself and have your child use the hints to infer information about you.



- ❖ To help support your child's social inference skills you could try the "feelings" guessing game. Write the names of different feelings or emotions (e.g. happy, sad or disappointed) on pieces of paper and put them in a bag. Have your child pull a piece of paper from the bag without looking and then show you. Support your child in guessing the emotion by providing them with clues as to when someone might feel that way. For example, for "happy" you could say "when I won first place in the race", "when I got my new puppy", "when I am with my friends".

