

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2003



KID BITS

Teamwork works

When there are chores to be done, help your youngsters discover the magic of teamwork. Give each of them a specific job. For example, one can feed the dog while the other fills the water bowl. Your children will learn that cooperation gets the job done!

Math in motion

Want to introduce your child to math concepts? Try playing games that require counting. *Examples:* Roll dice and ask him to count the dots. Throw wadded paper balls into a waste can, and help him keep score to see who gets the most “baskets.”

Better school behavior

You can encourage your child’s good behavior at school by helping him practice at home. When your youngster should walk instead of run, ask him to use his “walking feet.” Say, “Wear your listening ears,” when you want him to listen carefully to what you’re saying.

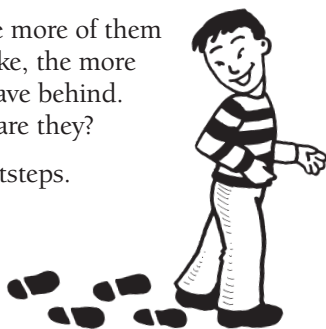
Worth quoting

“Love is a fruit in season at all times.”
Mother Teresa

Just for fun

Q: The more of them you take, the more you leave behind. What are they?

A: Footsteps.



A love of learning

David is fascinated with his ant farm. Beth will put jigsaw puzzles together for hours. Why do children love learning? Because exploration and imagination are fun! Here are three building blocks of learning that you can give to your youngster.

Time

Rather than cleaning up your child’s projects or toys right away, try leaving them where they are for a day or two. Encourage her to revisit them by asking questions such as “How could you make your block tower look different?” and “What colors could you add to your drawing?” With time to explore, your child may add to her original creation or change it into something completely new.

Opportunity

Boost your youngster’s learning by giving him real experiences that build on his interests. *Example:* Your child and his friend enjoy playing “ice cream



shop.” You could look for an ice cream recipe to make together or take them on a trip behind the scenes at a real ice cream parlor. You’ll encourage your youngster to follow through on his ideas.

Point of view

Search for unusual or different perspectives together. Try looking upside down at a tree or lying in the grass to see the world from a grasshopper’s viewpoint. Helping your little one to investigate creatively will encourage her to develop different ways of looking at the world. ♥

Happier writing



Q: My daughter becomes frustrated whenever she practices handwriting. How can I encourage her to stick with it?

A: One way is to provide your daughter with activities that don’t seem like writing. For example, painting is a great way for children to practice holding a pencil-shaped tool.

Start by writing the alphabet on a large piece of paper. Give your youngster a paintbrush and watercolors so she can trace over the letters. Then, have her write her name and a few simple words. When she becomes comfortable with the paintbrush, let her use large markers in different colors. Reducing her frustration will make writing practice more enjoyable. ♥

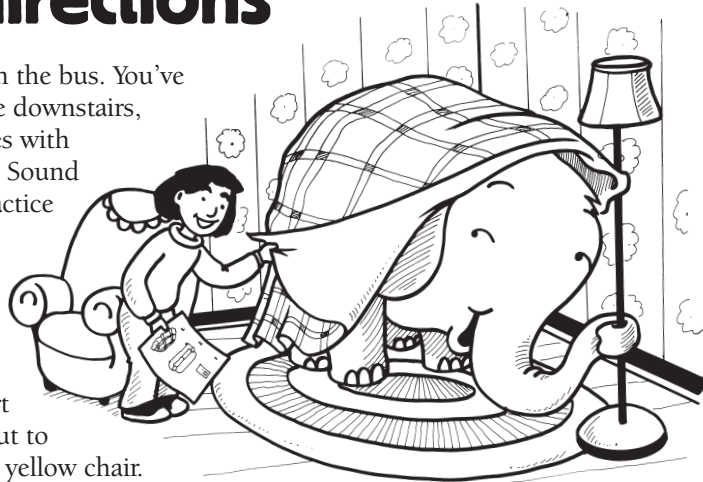


Following directions

It's time for your child to catch the bus. You've asked him to comb his hair, come downstairs, and bring his book bag. He arrives with disheveled hair and no book bag. Sound familiar? Young children need practice in following directions. Try these activities with your youngster.

Hide-and-find

- Hide a toy or other item.
- Say or write down several short instructions. *Example:* First, go out to the porch. Next, walk over to the yellow chair. Then, lift the blanket.
- Tell your child that if he follows all the instructions, he will find the toy.



Picture-by-picture

- Draw instructions for your youngster to follow. For example, your child needs to clean her room and make her bed. You could draw toys and shoes in their proper places and a bed with an arrow showing how the covers should be pulled up.
- Have your youngster circle each picture as he completes the instructions.

Then, ask him to bring them to you when he's finished. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Simplify the season

Children love to make things. During the gift-giving season, homemade wrapping paper will do the trick—and save you a few dollars. (Parent supervision is required for this activity.)



Cut off the bottoms of several paper grocery bags. Then, cut down one side of the bags so they open to a flat piece of paper. If you have pinking shears or other decorative scissors, trim the outside edges of the paper.

Have your youngster decorate the paper with art supplies. Encourage her to be creative by using glitter, shiny star stickers, pipe cleaners, colored markers, crayons, paints, and pieces of ribbon. When the paper is dry, let her use it to wrap gifts. ♥

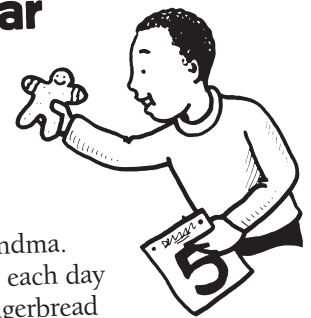
PARENT TO PARENT

A patience calendar

Our children have a hard time being patient when they know something exciting is going to happen. My husband and I came up with a system that helps our boys practice patience—and gives them a better understanding of time.

One exciting event in our house is a visit from Grandma. On a calendar, we tape a paper gingerbread man onto each day the children have to wait until she arrives. We use gingerbread men because Grandma always brings cookies when she visits us. As each day passes, the boys take turns removing the gingerbread men from the calendar.

Our "patience calendar" has made waiting easier for everyone. We also use it to help the boys learn the days of the week and for other calendar activities. ♥



Dealing with loss

"Why did Uncle Martin die? Is he coming back?" These questions are difficult to handle, especially when the entire family is grieving. You can help your youngster cope with the loss of a loved one by keeping these tips in mind:

- ▼ Keep your family routine as normal as possible. And be sure your child has familiar things available to him when he needs them (like a special blanket, book, or toy).

- ▼ Give your child extra doses of love and understanding. Keep in mind that you may have to explain more than once what has happened.



- ▼ Try reading books like these to help your child through a time of grief: *Badger's Parting Gifts* by Susan Varley, and *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* by Leo Buscaglia. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
3035 Valley Avenue, Suite 103, Winchester, VA 22601
(540) 723-0322 • rfeecustomer@aspenpubl.com
ISSN 1540-5567