

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2003 

KID BITS

Daily math

Talk to your youngster every day about number concepts. *Examples:* Show him the lines on a measuring cup and have him pour a recipe ingredient up to the mark. Give him a ruler and ask him to help you measure the floor for a rug.

Handling a habit

Some children suck their thumbs or bite their nails. It's not unusual for kids to have habits like these. The good news is that "bad" habits will fade with time. What should you do in the meantime? The best advice is to simply ignore them.

DID YOU KNOW?

One of the most common causes of burns to children is hot liquids. Even ordinary tap water can burn. Reduce your hot-water heater's temperature to 120 degrees or lower, and always hand-test water before bathing youngsters. *Source:* www.safekids.org

Worth quoting

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up."
Mark Twain

Just for fun



Teacher: You forgot the dot over the "i."

Student: No, I didn't. It's still in the pencil!

Let's visit the library

Some parents might think twice about taking their young children to the library. Why? Because they worry that their youngsters will get bored or interrupt others.

But the library is a terrific place for people of all ages! And with a little planning, you and your child can have a successful and learning-filled library adventure.

How to prepare:

- Carry a bag or backpack to easily take home checked-out books and tapes.
- Don't forget your library card (or your driver's license so you can get one—library cards are free).
- Tell your little one how long you will stay and how many books she's allowed to check out.
- Call ahead to find out when special programs are scheduled, such as story hour, when books are read aloud by the librarian or volunteers.
- Consider scheduling morning library visits. They are usually the least busy times, and your youngster is likely to be well rested.

While you're there:

- Spend some time reading a couple of books to your child. It's a great opportunity for uninterrupted, one-on-one time. As his reading skills improve, encourage him to read a book to you.
- Let your child discover and enjoy the books or the toys—whatever she likes. Remember, it's important for your child to know that the library is a fun place to be. Then, she'll look forward to future visits. ♥



Building a book collection

Want to add to your family's collection of books? You could go to a bookstore and pay the price on the back cover. Or you could try these inexpensive suggestions for expanding your reading library:



Wonderful books can be found at **yard sales** for just pennies. Don't be surprised if you find your youngster's favorite series for sale.

Many schools offer **book clubs or fairs**. The books are new and cost less than retail price—and the school usually benefits from the sale by receiving free books.

You can find treasures at **used bookstores**. *Tip:* Ask about trading in your own used books. ♥

Coping with change

Summer is on the way, and your family's routines will probably change. These changes can be tough for young children. One way to make them a little easier for your youngsters is to let them know what to expect.

Share your plan

Tell your children what they'll be doing when the change takes place, such as when school ends for the year. *Example:* "When school's out for the summer, we'll go to the play group at the park three days a week. You'll get to see some of your school buddies."

Reassure them

Help your youngsters feel secure in the changes to their routine by reassuring them about what *won't* change. *Example:* "We'll still take a nap in the middle of the day, just like before. I'll read your favorite books to you until you're sleepy."



Count the days

Use a calendar to show your children how much time will pass before the transition. For example, if they're going

to a new baby-sitter, mark the date on the calendar with a sticker, star, or smiley face. Each morning, help your youngsters count the days until the change. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Summer "painting"

When it's warm outside, there's nothing better than busying your little one with a small pan of cold water and a paintbrush. Here's a fun activity that encourages creativity and writing practice.

Using the paintbrush and water, let your youngster "paint" whatever his heart desires on a driveway or sidewalk. His artwork will soon disappear in the bright sun. Then, he can paint a new masterpiece.



A twist on this activity is to put a few ice cubes in the water. Your child can use the ice cubes like chalk to practice his ABCs or words he knows. See if he can guess how long it will take for his writing to disappear. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A Taming TV

Q: I worry that my children may be watching more television than they should. How much is too much?

A: If your youngsters' day consists of playing outside for several hours, reading some books, doing puzzles, and coloring, a little TV time shouldn't be a problem. However, if they spend all morning watching cartoons, it's time to change the scenery!

Research is mixed as to how much is "too much." But most experts agree that television can keep young children from experiencing important parts of life—playing with others, reading and learning, and interacting with the world outside.

What should you do? Set limits on the amount of television your kids watch. Then, give them alternatives. Could they help you with a chore? Play a game? Have a friend visit for the afternoon? ♥



PARENT TO PARENT An independent streak

My daughter Sally has always had strong opinions about the clothing she wears. I remember one chilly winter day when she argued fiercely for wearing shorts to school!

I found a way to make my daughter's need to choose her clothing work for both of us. When the weather is cold, I make sure there are only warm clothes, such as pants,



long-sleeved shirts, and leggings, in her drawer. That way, Sally can choose what she wants to wear—but only from things that are appropriate for the weather. As it gets warmer, I replace the winter clothes with lighter ones.

By the way, she did talk me into letting her wear shorts to school one winter day—with leggings under them and a warm pair of socks. We were both happy! ♥