

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2003

## KID BITS



### Love is enough

Children often have questions about families that are different from theirs. Talk with your youngster about foster, adoptive, step, and extended families (those with grandparents or other relatives in the home). No matter who makes up a family, with love they're all the same.

### A box of creativity

Here's a simple way to boost your child's creative thinking. Give her a large cardboard box like the kind used for appliances. Let her decide what the box will be—maybe an enchanted cottage, or a spaceship? She can decorate it with crayons, markers, or paint.

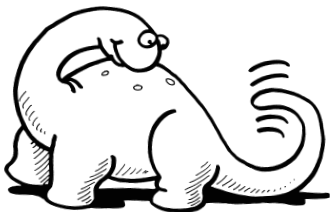
### Family rules

Does your family have rules? If not, consider setting rules that even the youngster members can follow. *Examples:* We speak pleasantly to one another. We respect each other's privacy. We ask permission before using someone else's belongings.

### Worth quoting

"The flowers of kindness never fade."  
*Anonymous*

### Just for fun



**Q:** What followed the dinosaur?

**A:** Its tail!

## Two sides to the story

### Understanding your child's personality

Did you know that by recognizing and responding to your child's personality type, you can help him be successful at home and in school? Here are descriptions of common personality traits and tips for making the most of each.

#### Energetic and expressive

"My child hugs his friends as soon as we get to school. He bounces around the room, playing with everyone."

- Your youngster may get easily bored while working alone and prefers being in a group. He's likely to enjoy talking, singing, and lots of physical activity.

- If he becomes distracted while working with others, have him work by himself for short amounts of time. You may need to give him several gentle reminders to finish.

- Encourage your child's willingness to express enthusiasm for the things he likes.

#### Reserved and thoughtful

"At our play group, my youngster hides behind my legs. Sometimes it takes almost an hour before she begins an activity."

- Your child enjoys calm projects. She works best by herself, but may also like having a friend work quietly alongside her.

- Allow her to take the extra time she needs to get used to unfamiliar situations.

- Give your child many chances to try new things. The more experiences she has, the more comfortable she'll become over time.



*Editor's Note:* Many children exhibit a combination of these characteristics.♥

### Handling tantrums

All kids experience frustration and anger from time to time. What can you do when these feelings get out of control and turn into temper tantrums?

**Wait.** It's impossible to communicate with an upset child. Allow the tantrum to subside before trying to talk with your youngster.

**Ignore the behavior.** Simply sit quietly with your child. It will soon be over.

**Calm and comfort.** Offer a nice, long hug. Reassure your child that you love him.

Tantrums can also be brought on by hunger and exhaustion. Allow plenty of time for eating and resting during your youngster's active day.♥



# Up and over the top!

Understanding the concept of directions is an important part of learning. Here are some ways to share directional words with your child. As you work with your youngster, be sure to emphasize each directional word.

## Top, bottom, middle

Tell your child to put one block on **top** of another block. Tape an interesting picture to the **bottom** of a chair, and ask him to look for it. Have him set the flowers in the **middle** of the table.

## Over, under

Help your child drape a blanket **over** two chairs to make a fort. Ask her if the cat is **under** the bed.

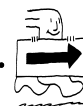
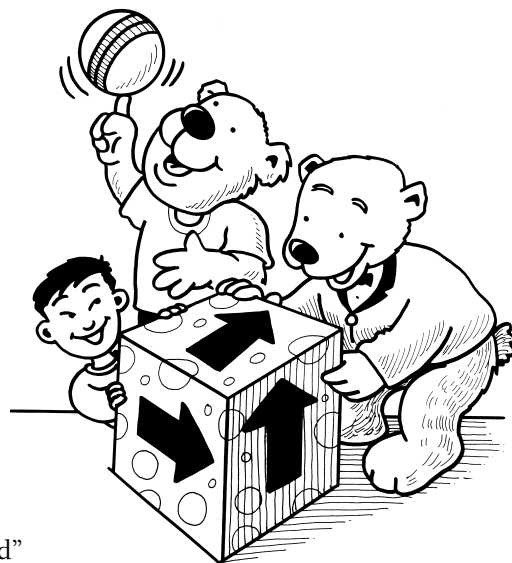
## Front, back

Let your youngster choose whether to sit in the **front** or **back** of the movie theater. Point out the **front** and **back** of his shirt.

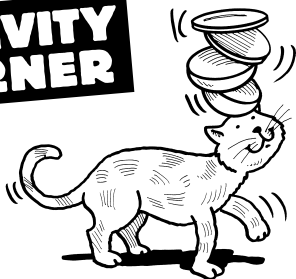
## Left, right

Place three items, such as a ball, a book, and a crayon, side by side. Ask your child to tell you the name of the item on the **left** and the one on the **right** of the center item.

Once your youngster begins to learn these words, add other directional words like “above” and “below,” “forward” and “backward,” and “in” and “out.” ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER



## Match 'em up

This fun matching activity will help your child build useful math skills and coordination.

Gather various plastic containers with lids—water bottles, plastic storage tubs, microwave bowls, clean food containers, etc. Mix up the lids and containers and spread them out on a table.

Challenge your youngster to match the containers with the correct lids. Then, see if she can put each lid on its container. When she has finished matching all of them correctly, reward her by letting her choose one for her favorite drink or snack! ♥

## Q & A

## Bilingual learning

**Q:** My child will be attending school for the first time next year. I'm worried that he may have trouble learning at school because we speak mostly Spanish at home. Do you have any suggestions?

**A:** Start by speaking with the director or principal of the school now to find out if there is an English language program your youngster can attend before school begins. Also, ask if there is a bilingual staff member or parent volunteer who can help you and your child communicate with the school.

When your child starts school, be sure to tell the teacher about his interests. The more the teacher knows about your youngster, the easier it will be for them to communicate. And stay in touch throughout the year—working closely with the teacher is the best way to ensure that your child's first year is a happy, successful one. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

## A family get-together

As a single parent with three children, I find it's not always easy for the four of us to spend time together. Recently, I started setting aside a special time once a week for us to gather and talk. The “family huddle,” as my oldest child calls it, turned out to be a wonderful idea.

We get together at the same time each week. The first thing we do is turn off the TV and

telephone so there are no interruptions. Everyone gets a chance to share anything they want to talk about. We make sure the little one gets to “go” twice, simply because she's the youngest. Every huddle ends with a group hug. The kids look forward to this time together so much that they've asked if we can start having family huddles twice a week! ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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