

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2004

KID BITS



Ready for winter

As colder weather approaches, make sure your child stays warm and comfortable at school. Dress her in layers so she can remove them if she gets too hot indoors. If she wears boots, send regular shoes for her to change into when she arrives at school.

Gentle words

Does your youngster ever say, "I hate you," when you discipline him? He doesn't really mean it—"hate" is probably the strongest word he knows to express himself. Try responding to him in a way that helps him more accurately describe his feelings. *Example:* "I can see you're really angry right now."

Generosity lesson

When shopping for a gift for someone, take your child along. If possible, let her choose what to buy. For example, ask, "Which scented candle do you think Aunt Carol would like?" Encouraging your youngster to think about what others might like can help her learn generosity.

Worth quoting

"If you can imagine it, you can achieve it. If you can dream it, you can become it."

William Arthur Ward

Just for fun

Q: What animal never needs a haircut?

A: A bald eagle.



Raising a thinker

Thomas Edison is said to have tried 1,800 ideas before creating the light bulb. What was the key to his success? Thinking creatively.

How can you motivate your little one to think of new ideas and solve problems as he grows and learns? Try these suggestions.



Build on his interests. For example, if your child likes bugs, check out insect books from the library. Use them to identify insects in the yard or at the park. To encourage independent thinking, ask your youngster what he'd like to explore next, and how he could find out more about it.

Give your child plenty of opportunities to work with open-ended activities, such as finger paints and sidewalk chalk. These materials allow her to use her imagination and develop her creativity.

Ask questions that require extra thought. For instance, after asking your youngster his favorite color, follow up with a second question that requires more than a one-word answer. *Example:* "Why do you like purple the best?"

Let your child try to find solutions to problems on her own. For example, suppose she needs help with a puzzle. Rather than putting in the pieces yourself, ask, "Which pieces have you already tried? Is there another way you can turn that piece to make it fit?" ♥

Calendar math

A calendar can be more than just a tool for keeping track of dates and events. You can use it to give your youngster a little daily math practice.

■ Mark each day with an X or a sticker. You might say to your child, "Today is the fourth. What was yesterday's date? What will tomorrow be?"

■ Use the numbers on the calendar to count forward and backward. Your child can also practice using ordinal numbers (first, second, third).

■ As the month winds down, challenge your youngster to count how many days are left.

■ When a new month arrives, change the page together. Point out the name of the month, note how many days it has, and talk about any special days. ♥

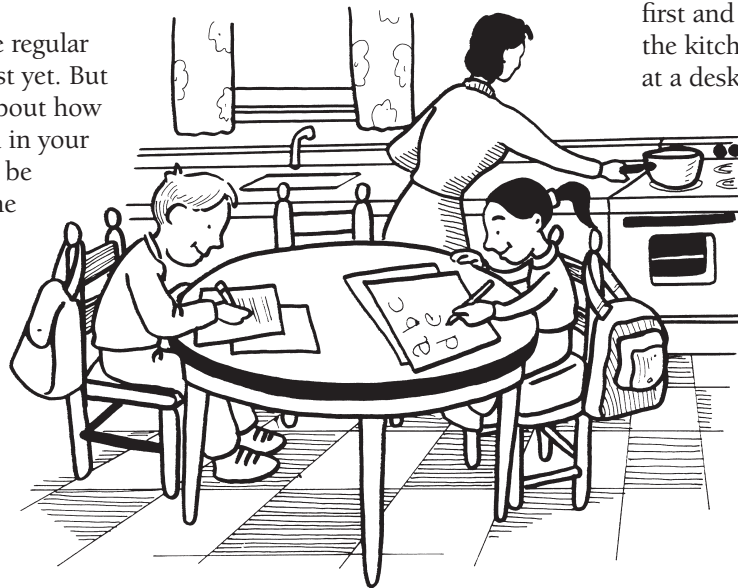


Introduction to homework

Your child may not have regular homework assignments just yet. But you might want to think about how homework will be handled in your home. That way, there will be fewer hassles when the time comes.

When and where?

If your youngster's teacher asks her to do something at home, such as practicing writing her name, take the opportunity to find out how she likes to work. Does she prefer to begin as soon as she



gets home? Or would she rather take a break first and then start? Does she like to work at the kitchen table while you prepare dinner, or at a desk in another room?

What's your role?

Take an interest in your child's assignment, no matter how small. You will show him that school is important to you. Homework can also be a great way for you to see what your youngster is learning in school, since assignments usually relate to the day's class work.

Tip: Older siblings can be perfect role models. Encourage your youngster to watch quietly while they do their homework. ♥

Q & A Conquering fears

Q: My daughter recently started asking me to check under her bed at night. And the last time we had a storm, she was very frightened. How can I make her feel more secure?



A: It sounds like your daughter is experiencing normal childhood fears. As she gets older, she'll probably become less fearful. In the meantime, try these suggestions.

Talk about her fears. Sometimes just getting them out in the open can make them seem less scary.

Take her fears seriously. Don't laugh them off or tell her to grow up. Instead, say, "Things look scary in the dark sometimes, don't they?"

Share some knowledge. For instance, read a book about storms together so your child can learn what causes thunder and lightning. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT Help with transition

My son Joshua sometimes has trouble moving between activities. Whether he's getting out of the car and into the house or finishing a game before bedtime, it can be a struggle. I discovered something that really helps both of us.

To let him know to get ready for dinner, I sing, "Wash, wash, wash your hands," to the tune of "Row, Row, Row Your Boat." When it's time to go to school, I sing, "If you're ready and you know it, get your coat," to the tune of "If You're Happy and You Know It." A favorite for just about any activity is "Are you ready, are you ready, Joshua, Joshua?" instead of "Are You Sleeping?"

When Joshua hears me singing, he joins in and rushes to do whatever the words say. He even makes up his own words to his favorite tunes! ♥

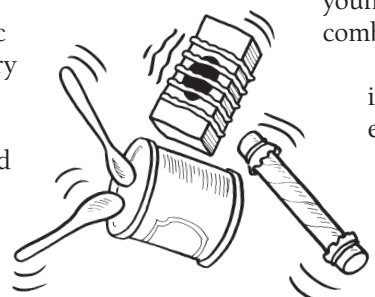


ACTIVITY CORNER Shake, rattle, and roll!

You can help your youngster learn to describe and compare sounds—and develop an appreciation for music. How? By making musical instruments together.

To make maracas, half-fill empty plastic water bottles with dry rice, beans, or pasta. Put the lid on, and shake. Ask your child if the bottles sound different depending upon how full they are.

Coffee cans, empty ice cream pints, and plastic containers with lids can all be used for drums. Try wooden spoons or the eraser ends of pencils for drumsticks. How many sounds can your youngster make using different combinations of drums and sticks?



Create a guitar by stretching rubber bands around an empty tissue box and plucking them. Do the bands over the opening sound different from the ones around the ends? ♥

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 • rfeustomer@aspenpubl.com
ISSN 1540-5567