

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2005

KID BITS



Cooling off

Anger can be contagious. When your child loses his temper, it may be best to leave the room before you become angry, too. Tell your youngster that you'll return to discuss the problem when he calms down.

Playground exercise

The playground isn't just for fun—it's a great way to build strength and coordination. Encourage your child to push herself on the swing or tackle the monkey bars. She can also practice climbing ladders, jumping from low surfaces, and balancing on ropes or beams.

Treats for travel

Planning a trip with your children? To keep them occupied, take along old toys they haven't seen for a while, or buy a few new, inexpensive items. Try a plastic pinball game or a tablet that erases itself when you lift the top sheet.

Worth quoting

"Help others get ahead. You will always stand taller with someone else on your shoulders."

Bob Moawad

Just for fun

Q: What's worse than a giraffe with a sore throat?

A: A centipede with sore feet!



Spring science

As spring arrives, take advantage of the warmer weather by joining your youngster in outdoor learning activities. A backyard or park makes the perfect science laboratory for your child to discover the natural world.

Plants

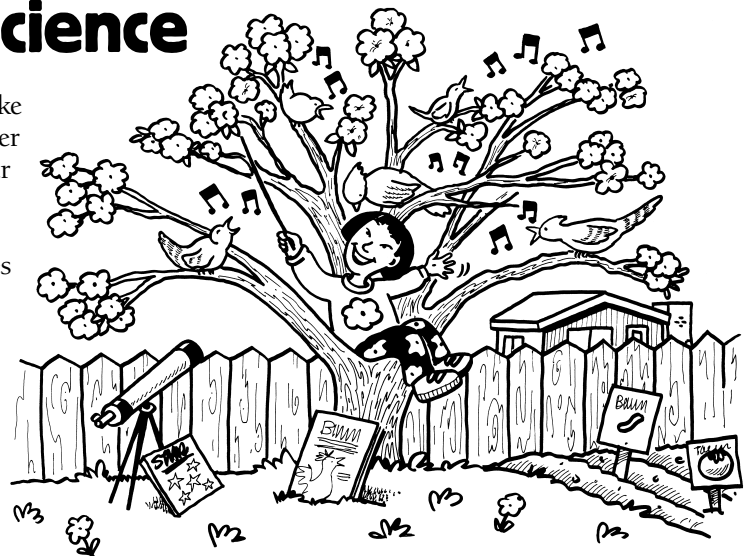
Growing plants gives kids an opportunity to observe the cycle of life. Beans are a good choice because they grow quickly. Plant the seeds in paper cups filled with soil, and place them by a sunny window. Poke holes in the bottoms of the cups for drainage, and remind your youngster to water the seeds regularly.

Birds

Bird watching is a great way to study nature on a daily basis. If you can find a nest, have your child observe the habits of the mother bird. Point out how she brings food to the babies once they're born. What do they eat? How often does she feed them?

Stars

For an introduction to astronomy, go outdoors on a clear evening and have your youngster look for shapes among the stars. See if you can identify a few constellations. (For pictures of constellations and information on how to find them, check out www.corvus.com/con-page/con-88.htm.)



Idea: Encourage your child to keep a journal to record what he learns. He can write down how tall his plants are each week or draw pictures of the birds or constellations he sees. ♥

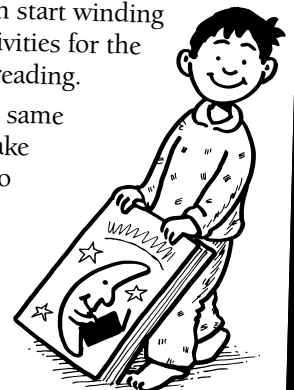
Good sleep habits

"But, Mom, I'm not tired!" If you've ever heard this while your youngster runs at full speed late into the evening, you may have been perplexed. When kids are overtired, their brains release stress hormones, which can keep them awake.

What can you do to ensure that your child has a good night's sleep?

- After dinner, help him start winding down. Choose quiet activities for the end of the day, such as reading.
- Put him to bed at the same time each night. And make sure he gets at least 10 to 12 hours of sleep.

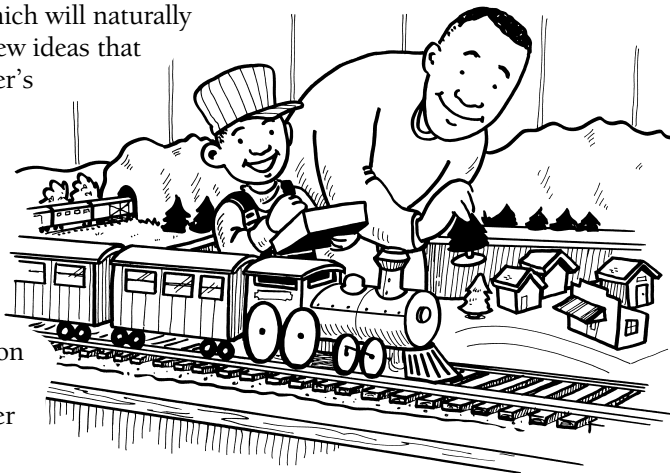
Remember, he is probably the most tired when he appears to be full of energy. ♥



Increasing attention span

Does your youngster's mind wander? Most young children have short attention spans, which will naturally increase with age. Here are a few ideas that will help stretch your youngster's concentration skills:

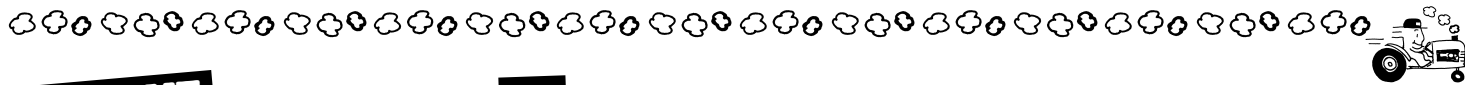
■ Join your child while he plays—you may notice he's more attentive when you're there. Help him pretend to cook food or push his train along the tracks. Then, gradually decrease your participation until your youngster is able to stick with the activity for longer periods of time.



■ Read simple rhymes together. Nursery rhymes can increase your youngster's attention span as he learns to listen for the repeating phrases. *Examples:* "This Old Man," "Hickory Dickory Dock."

■ When your child practices activities that require concentration, such as handwriting, do what you can to eliminate distractions. You might try playing classical music or creating quiet "white noise" by turning on a fan.

Editor's Note: If you're concerned about your child's attention span, ask his teacher if she has noticed any difficulties at school. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT Notes for reading

It's been a struggle to get my son interested in reading books. One day I realized that he seems to notice what I'm writing. So, I started writing notes to him.



Before he wakes up in the morning, I'll put a note by his cereal bowl. "Good morning, Matt. Today is picture day at school." When he gets home from school, he'll find a message from me on his bedroom door. "We're going to the library this afternoon." He can't read them on his own just yet, so we do it together.

Since the messages are just for him, Matt's eager to read them. He has also begun enjoying books because he recognizes some of the words from my notes in the stories we read. ♥

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

Q & A Benefits of pets

Q: We're considering getting a family pet. What are the benefits of having a pet, and how do we prepare our children for its arrival?

A: Owning a pet is a great way to teach your kids responsibility and caring, as well as respect for other living things. Before you bring a pet home, explain to your youngsters that animals have needs just like people do. They need food, water, exercise, and sleep, and to be treated with kindness.

Be sure to supervise your children when they're playing with or caring for their pet. Show them the correct way to handle the animal and take care of its needs.

The first few weeks with a new pet will be an adjustment for everyone. But creating a positive relationship between your children and their pet from the start will build a bond that lasts a lifetime. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Graph it!

Making simple graphs can help your child practice math skills such as collecting, recording, and organizing information.

Here are two graph ideas to try. For each graph, you'll need a sheet of paper. Use a marker or pencil and a ruler to divide the paper into several rows and columns.

● Help your child write the name of each family member on a row, placing



one letter in each square. Which name is the longest? Do any names have the same number of letters?

● Have your youngster ask family members to choose their favorite color from a list. *Example:* yellow, red, blue. Then, help her graph the results, using one column for each person and one row for each color.

Let her use colored markers to fill in the squares. Which is the most popular color? ♥