

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2005



KID BITS

Lub-dub, lub-dub

Let your child listen to your heartbeat. Show him how to put one end of a cardboard tube over your heart and listen at the other end. Help him use a minute timer or a watch to count how many times it beats in a minute. Then, jog in place for one minute. Ask him to listen and count again.

Honesty tip

If your youngster frequently tells the same fib ("But, Mom, my room is clean!"), don't give her the chance to repeat it. Rather than asking her if she has done something when you're pretty sure she hasn't, say, "I'll be there in five minutes to see your clean room."

Poems and pictures

Encourage your child to explore poetry with this simple idea. Read aloud a verse from a book of children's poems, and ask him to draw a picture to go along with it. *Tip:* You could type or write the poem for him and paste it below the picture.

Worth quoting

"The art of being wise is the art of knowing what to overlook."

William James

Just for fun

Q: What always falls without getting hurt?

A: Snow!



Using consequences

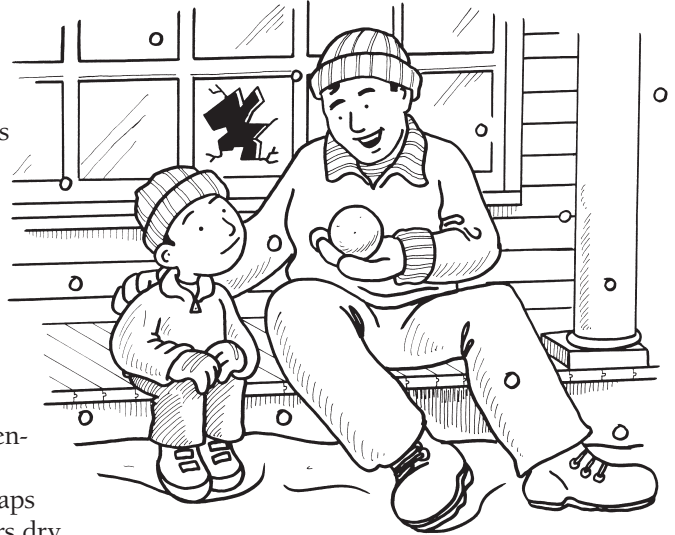
Did you know that the word "discipline" means "to teach"? Yet when it comes to discipline, parents may feel like they're constantly dishing out punishments. Instead, consider letting your youngster experience the natural and logical consequences of his behavior.

● Natural consequences happen without any intervention on your part. *Example:* Your youngster leaves the caps off his markers. The markers dry up, and he can't use them. Logical consequences are ones you create as a result of your child's behavior. *Example:* He writes on the table with the markers, and you take them away.

● For consequences to be effective, they should be closely related to the misbehavior. If your youngster throws a toy, taking it away is probably better than giving her a time-out. But a time-out might make more sense when she hits another child, because the separation gives her a chance to cool down.

● Consequences also need to happen as soon after the deed as possible. If you discipline your youngster at home for a minor incident at school, by the time the consequence happens, he may not remember what he did in the first place.

Tip: End with a positive discussion that helps your child understand the consequence.



"We had to leave the playground because you didn't share the swing with Bobby. Next time I know you'll remember to be a good friend." ♥

Money matters

One way to start teaching your youngster to be responsible with money is to let her see you using it. Try these ideas.

At the store: Take cash with you to the store. When you're ready to purchase an item, tell your child its cost. Let her help you count the money and hand it to the cashier.

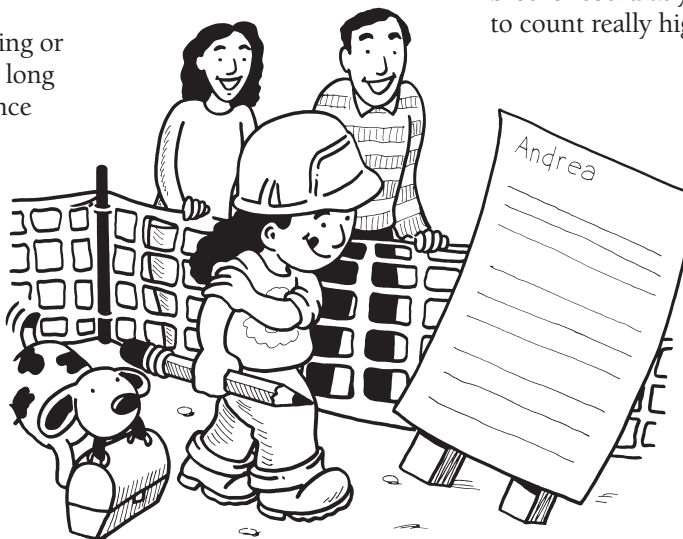
At the bank: Go inside the bank rather than using the drive-through. Explain to your youngster what you are doing. "I'm putting our money in the bank where they will save it until we're ready to use it." Compare it to children saving money in a piggy bank. ♥



Improving self-confidence

The words you choose when praising or correcting your child's work can go a long way toward building her self-confidence in school. Consider these ideas:

- Find something specific about your child's work that she did well. If she's struggling with writing lowercase letters, point out how well she wrote the first letter in her name: "Andrea, that's a terrific capital 'A.' Let's practice the 'd' some more."
- Focus on how much your youngster has learned, rather than comparing him with others. For example,



instead of saying, "You count higher than your brother could at your age," try, "You've learned to count really high this year, haven't you?"

- Be honest. If you tell your child she read a book beautifully when she didn't, she may not believe your praise in the future. Instead, say, "That was a tough book. You worked hard to read it well."

Note: Be careful what you say when talking about your youngster's work to others, even if you don't think he's listening. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT Midyear move

Shortly after my daughter's first year of school, my husband was transferred to a new office and we had to move. We knew it might be difficult for Sarah, so we prepared in advance.

First, we took pictures of our house, her friends and school, and some of her favorite places,



including the playground. Then, we put them in a scrapbook and suggested to Sarah that she share them with the new friends she would make.

After we moved, we toured the new school and met the teacher. We also met a neighbor whose son would be in Sarah's classroom, and we walked with them on the first day of school.

Being the new kid wasn't easy, but our planning made Sarah a lot less anxious. She loves her teacher and has already made several new friends! ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Homemade play dough

Does your youngster like play dough? Help him make his own.

He'll get practice in following directions, measuring, and mixing. *Editor's Note:* Parent supervision is required—this dough is not edible.

For "snow" dough, mix together 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, and 1 cup water. To make "gingerbread" dough, combine 2 cups flour, 1 cup salt, 2 tbsp. ground cinnamon, 1 tbsp. ground cloves, and 1 cup water. Then, use items such as cookie cutters and plastic knives to make fun shapes.

Hint: If you want to reuse the dough, add 2 tbsp. vegetable oil to make it soft and pliable, and store it in a plastic refrigerator dish or a resealable plastic bag. If your child wants to make a craft to keep, leave the oil out of the recipe so his creation will harden. ♥



Q & A Conference questions

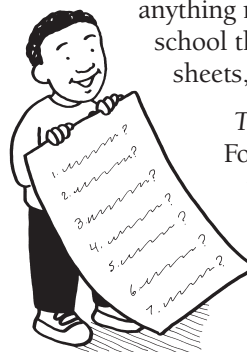
Q: Our school's parent conferences are quickly approaching. How can I get as much out of ours as possible?

A: Make the most of your time with the teacher by preparing questions like these:

- ✓ What are some of the skills my child still needs to learn this year? Is he progressing as you would expect?
- ✓ How do you evaluate students? (If your youngster earns grades, ask what he must

do to get a certain grade and what each grade means.)

- ✓ What can I do at home? Is there anything my child can bring home from school that will help me (writing worksheets, extra books to read)?



Tip: Ask open-ended questions. For example, "How does my youngster relate to other kids?" will give you more information than, "Does he get along well with others?" ♥