

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2005

KID BITS



Around the world

Want an easy way to introduce your child to geography? While reading a book or watching TV, look for the story's setting on a map or globe. Then, mark the location with a sticker or Post-it note. Your child can go back and remember all the places he has "visited."

"Thank you!"

Teaching your youngster to say thank you can go a long way toward fostering gratitude. When your spouse prepares dinner or the attendant fills your gas tank, let your child hear you express thanks. If your youngster receives a gift, help her write a note to the sender.

Handwriting hint

Letter reversals are common as children begin writing. Share this tip with your child if he reverses the lowercase letter "e." Write an "e" on a piece of paper. Then, explain that "e" eats other letters by opening his mouth in the direction he reads (to the right)!

Worth quoting

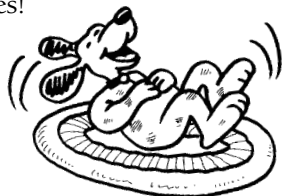
"The work will wait while you show the child the rainbow. But the rainbow will not wait while you work."

Anonymous

Just for fun

Q: Why do dogs run in circles?

A: Because it's hard to run in squares!



Secrets of self-control

Children aren't born with self-control—they learn it through practice.

Teach your child self-control by trying these ideas. You'll improve his behavior and his ability to get along with others.

Develop control

Part of self-control is being able to express feelings appropriately. To help your child learn to do this, create a "feeling chart." Draw several faces and label each one with an emotion (sad, angry, happy, scared). From time to time, ask your child to show you how he is feeling by pointing to one of the faces. Then, help him read aloud the name for the emotion.

Show control

Use everyday situations as opportunities to show your youngster self-control in action. Do you get frustrated with drivers who cut you off? Instead of reacting angrily, say something like, "That's a dangerous way to drive, isn't it?"

Reward control

Motivate your child to practice self-control by giving him incentives. For example, if he protests every night when it's time to go to bed, give him 10 small stickers or other treats. Tell him that each time he whines, he has to give one of them back to you. Remind him that the fewer goodies he has to give you, the more he gets to keep.

Note: Try to stay calm when your youngster misbehaves. You are a role model for your child, even when disciplining him.♥



Artistic creativity

You may not think of your child's scribbles as "art," but she probably does! How can you nourish her creative streak? Consider these tips:

- Provide your youngster with plenty of art supplies. In addition to coloring books and craft kits, give her blank paper, crayons, colored pencils, paper plates, Popsicle sticks, and fabric scraps. Then, encourage her to create away!
- Offer guidance, but let your child take the reins. For instance, if she needs help painting a sunflower, show her examples in books or real life. If she draws a lopsided fish and cuts it out crookedly, resist the urge to "fix" it.♥



Stress busters

Just like grown-ups, children feel stress from time to time. And holiday seasons can be particularly fast-paced for everyone. Here are some tips for reducing your family's anxiety—at any time of the year:

- Ask your family what their favorite traditions are. Maybe they enjoy big pancake breakfasts on lazy winter vacation days. Choose a few of the traditions that are important to everyone, and eliminate some of the rest.
- When traveling with young children, carry plenty of snacks and drinks with you. Take breaks during long trips, and alleviate boredom by playing travel games, such as



looking for specific letters or numbers on license plates and signs.

- Try to stick to your usual routine as much as possible. Although it's okay to occasionally stay up late for a special event, remember that youngsters thrive on regular bedtimes and naptimes. Also, build in time for play and relaxation each day.

- Plan ahead. If you're going to be doing a lot of shopping or errands, try splitting your time into smaller stretches. Children—and parents—can get cranky after spending long periods of time in busy stores! ♥



Q & A A new family member

Q: My wife and I are expecting our second child. When and how should we tell our firstborn the good news?



A: Some parents wait until the pregnancy is showing so the news will seem more real. Others prefer to tell siblings earlier to make sure they won't hear about it from someone else first.

Regardless of your timing, explain it in a way that lets your child know that the baby also belongs to him. *Example:* "Our family is having a baby, and you'll be the big brother." Whenever possible, point out babies and their siblings. "Look. That little boy has a baby in his family, too."

Above all, let your youngster know that you will love him just as much after the baby is born. Reassure him that you'll continue to do things together, like playing board games and reading stories. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Nursery rhymes revisited

While we were digging through some boxes of books, my daughter Emma discovered a book of nursery rhymes she had when she was a toddler. She asked me to read it with her. I was surprised at how much fun we had!

I was even more surprised to discover that the rhyming words helped her with reading. I read a few lines of "Sing a Song of Sixpence" ("The king was in his counting house, counting out his money"). As I read the next line, Emma filled in the word "honey." I asked her how she knew it, and she said, "It's like 'money,' only there's an 'h.'"

Nursery rhymes soon became a favorite part of our daily reading time. And now when Emma is reading a story for school, she realizes that, because she can read a word like "cat," she can also read "hat," "pat," and "rat." ♥



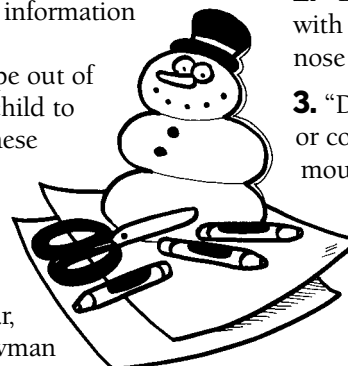
ACTIVITY CORNER

Fun with symbols

The world is full of symbols: on maps, on highway signs, and in math equations. Show your youngster how symbols represent information with this activity.

Cut a snowman shape out of white paper. Ask your child to color it by answering these questions:

1. "Which cookie do you like better—sugar or oatmeal?" If your youngster chooses sugar, tell her to give the snowman



blue eyes. For oatmeal, have her use green. (Jot down what she drew and its meaning. *Example:* blue eyes = sugar.)

2. "Do you like your cookies with milk or with juice?" (triangle nose = milk; circle nose = juice)
3. "Do you like your cookies warm or cool?" (red mouth = warm; pink mouth = cool)

Explain to your child that by looking at her drawing, you know what she likes (warm sugar cookies with milk). ♥

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 • rfcustomer@aspenpublishers.com
ISSN 1540-5567