

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2006

Minford Primary - Kindergarten

Title I

## KID BITS



### Tasty fractions

Use food to teach your child about fractions. Have her help you cut pancakes or tortillas into three equal parts. Explain that each is called a third. When she eats a waffle or sandwich, cut it into fourths, and ask her how many people could share it equally.

### Private conversations

If you hear your child talking to himself when he plays, don't worry. While adults tend to think silently, young children often think out loud. This kind of "talking play" helps youngsters develop language skills and also work through problems. *Example:* "Will the truck fit here? Yes, it will."

### Car seat reminder

Keep children in a car seat until age 4 and 40 pounds and in a booster seat until age 8 and 80 pounds (unless 4 feet 9 inches tall). Also, be sure the lap belt is snug over their hips, and always use the shoulder belt. For a safety inspection site near you, see [www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CPSFitting/Index.cfm](http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/CPS/CPSFitting/Index.cfm).

### Worth quoting

"There are two gifts we can give our children. One is roots. The other is wings." *Anonymous*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What can you make that can't be seen?

**A:** Noise!



## Raising a good citizen

Even the youngest children can learn to take care of others and their community. By setting an example and explaining your actions, you can teach your child to be a good citizen. Get started with these ideas.

**Help others.** Together, fill a box with canned goods to donate to a local food bank. Or have your youngster gather clothes she has outgrown to give to a homeless shelter.

**Respect property.** Explain that we are kind to things as well as to people. Encourage your child to keep library books clean, store them in a safe place, and return the books on time so others can read them.

**Care for the environment.** Point out public trash cans and show how you throw litter away to keep the community clean. Let your youngster help you sort plastic and newspapers for recycling.



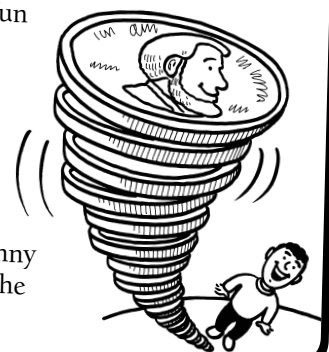
**Obey laws.** Children can follow simple laws such as using a crosswalk and wearing a bike helmet. When you and your youngster walk the dog, tell her it's the law to use a leash and clean up after her pet. Explain that rules keep her and others safe and healthy.

**Stay informed.** Let your child see you reading the newspaper. Discuss current events that she can understand: "They're building a new shopping center down the street—our neighborhood will become even busier!" When you vote, take her along and explain what you're doing. ♥

## Penny-pinching

Dig through your pockets for pennies, and you'll find an easy way to help your youngster develop the small-motor skills he needs for writing, drawing, and tying his shoes. Here are three fun activities to try:

1. Build a tower. See how many pennies he can stack before they fall over.
2. Have your child gently throw pennies a short distance (1–2 feet) into a small dish or box.
3. Let your youngster place a sheet of paper over a penny and rub it lightly with the side of a pencil or crayon. The engraving on the coin will appear on the paper. ♥



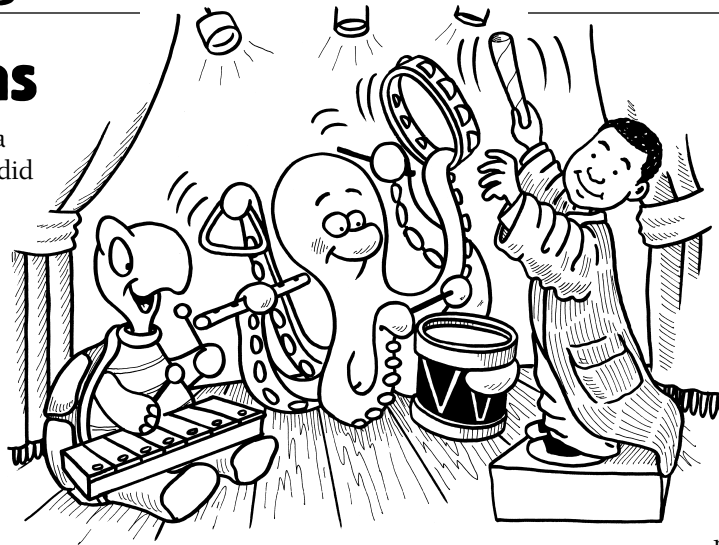
## Music lessons

When your child is singing a song or tapping out a rhythm, did you know he's also learning?

Songs build memory, vocabulary, creativity, and even math skills. They also teach youngsters to distinguish between sounds, an important step in learning to read. Introduce your child to these music concepts.

### Rhythm

Stomp your feet, snap your fingers, or tap your knees while singing or listening to music. Encourage your youngster to join you, and he'll soon learn



to hear the beat. *Hint:* Try counting the rhythm out loud, and see if he can repeat the pattern.

### Pitch

Make a "xylophone" by filling several same-sized glasses with increasing amounts of water. Ask your child to lightly hit the side of each glass with a spoon. Which ones sound higher? Lower?

### Tempo

Find a radio station that plays classical music. Together, "conduct" the music using empty paper towel tubes as batons. Show your child how to wave the baton slowly during the slow (adagio) parts and quickly during the fast (allegro) parts. *Tip:* Borrow a music dictionary from the library to teach your youngster music terms. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Gift coupons

Your youngster will get writing practice—and learn to give of himself—with this holiday gift project.

**Materials:** white construction paper, safety scissors, pencil, stapler

Together, make "My Gift to You" coupons for your child to give to family members. Inside will be tickets for jobs he can do for each person. Begin by asking him to help come up with ideas.



**Examples:**

"Set the table for dinner." "Help Dad clean the garage."

Then, cut the paper into coupon-sized strips, and help your child write out each job. Finally, staple the coupons together to make a book.

**Note:** Be sure to redeem the coupons! You might give advance notice by saying, "I'll need help setting the table tonight, so I'm going to use my coupon." ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

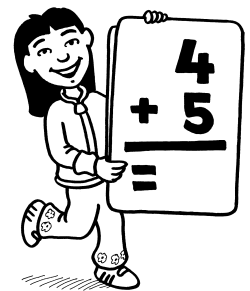
### Finding time to volunteer

My daughter's school recently sent home a request for volunteers. I work full-time, so I didn't think I'd be able to help. But

I called Mandy's teacher anyway, and he suggested quite a few ways for me to participate.

I enjoy using the computer, so I was able to make flash cards for the class. Another day, I spent a half hour reshelving library books before work. I also set up an emergency phone tree for the classroom.

Every now and then, I take a few vacation hours to spend in the classroom. Recently, I even went on a nature hike with my daughter's class and helped the children collect leaves and acorns. I felt good about being there, and Mandy was proud to show off her mother! ♥



## Q & A

### Family fun nights

**Q:** We want to spend more time together as a family but aren't sure where to start. How can we fit this into our busy schedules?

**A:** Try holding a family fun night once a month. Make the night extra special by choosing a theme, such as one of these:

★ Announce an "unplugged" night, with no electricity allowed. Have a candle-light picnic, roast marshmallows in the fireplace, or play hide-and-seek by flashlight.



★ Take family portraits. Snap pictures of each person, different combinations of people (mom and dad, sisters), and the whole family. Experiment with silly poses and different settings.

★ Have a box-decorating fest. Collect large cardboard boxes, and put out construction paper, glue, and child-safe scissors. Then, let your imaginations fly. A box might become a house, a car, or a pirate ship! ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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