

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2005

KID BITS



Independent dressing

Zippering, buttoning, and tying can be a challenge for young children. Choose clothes that encourage your youngster to be independent during the school day. Elastic-waist pants, thick shoelaces, and zippers with large pulls make getting dressed easier. *Tip:* Give her dress-up clothes with tougher closures to encourage practicing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Doctors recommend that children have a vision exam before they start school and a checkup every two to three years (yearly if they wear glasses). Be aware of these trouble signs in your child: squinting, rubbing his eyes, and closing one eye or tilting his head to see better.

No more naps

If your child has outgrown a daily nap but gets cranky in the evenings, try giving her 30 minutes of “quiet time” after school. Tell her she can read or color but has to rest quietly. She’ll have the energy she needs to make it through the rest of the day.

Worth quoting

“Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower.” *Albert Camus*

Just for fun

Q: What goes up and down without moving?

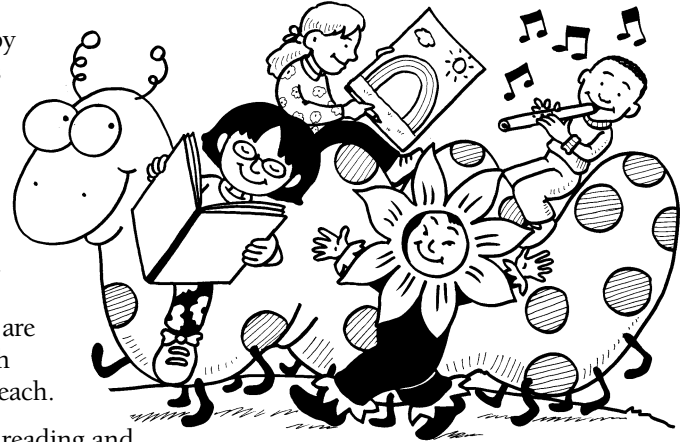
A: Stairs!



Four kinds of smart

Tyler learned to count by playing hopscotch. Maya’s favorite jigsaw puzzle taught her numbers. For Jesse, counting songs did the trick.

By figuring out how your child learns best, you can help her be more successful in school. Here are several learning styles, with ways to make the most of each.



Verbal learners master reading and writing easily. They enjoy hearing new words and making up rhymes. *Idea:* Make sure your youngster has plenty of books about topics she’s interested in and word games like Scrabble Junior and Boggle Junior.

Visual learners figure out left from right quickly and often excel in art and math. *Idea:* Have your child draw pictures to help him remember information. For example, he could draw a rainbow and label its colors.

Physical learners enjoy moving around and exploring through touch.

They usually do well in sports or dance. *Idea:* Let your youngster act out what she’s learning at school. For example, to remember the alphabet, she might bend her body to form the shapes of the letters.

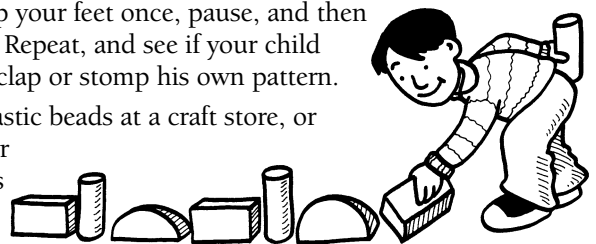
Auditory learners seem to remember everything they hear. Many have a gift for music and enjoy singing and playing instruments. *Idea:* Help your child memorize the days of the week by singing the words in a familiar tune.

Note: Although most kids have a favorite way to learn, they generally use a combination of styles. ♥

Pattern practice

Learning about patterns will give your child a head start in math. Try these activities together:

- Make a block tower, starting with a yellow block, then a blue one, and then another yellow block. Challenge your youngster to keep the pattern going.
- Clap your hands or stomp your feet once, pause, and then clap or stomp twice quickly. Repeat, and see if your child can follow along. Have him clap or stomp his own pattern.
- Buy some inexpensive plastic beads at a craft store, or use colored cereal rings. Your youngster can make patterns by stringing them on yarn in alternating colors. ♥



Healthy humor

Children who have a sense of humor will laugh at themselves, accept mistakes, and get along with others. But sometimes a youngster's idea of what's funny can hurt or offend someone. Keep these suggestions in mind:

- Kids often make jokes to deal with what they don't understand. If your youngster pokes fun at someone who's disabled, explain the person's disability: "That little girl uses the braces on her legs to help her walk." *Tip:* Remind your child that if he has questions about another person, it's considerate to wait until the two of you are alone to ask you.

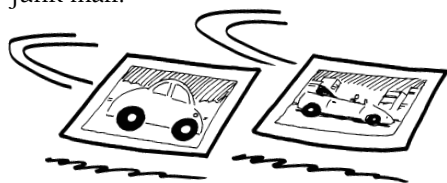


■ Children sometimes use humor to cover their embarrassment over bodily functions. When your child uses "bathroom words" or offensive terms, supply her with appropriate words to use instead.

Tip: To encourage a healthy sense of humor in your youngster, point out the oddities in everyday life: "Look—I wore two different colored socks today!" Young children also get a kick out of the opposite of what's normal. Read a story about a pig that moos or a cow that oinks, and your child will roll with laughter! ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Magazine memory

Want a fun way to improve your child's memory? Play this card game, made from magazines, catalogs, or junk mail.



Together, find pictures of 12 pairs of items, such as two shoes. (The pictures don't have to match exactly—just make sure they show the same item.) Glue the pictures onto 24 index cards.

Shuffle the cards and place them facedown in four rows. Take turns picking up two cards. Every time a player gets a match, he keeps the cards. If the cards don't match, he returns them facedown to the same spot. When all the cards are gone, the person with the most matches wins.

Hint: You can also use stickers or stamps on the cards, or write letters or numbers. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A Preparing for conferences

Q: I'll have my first meeting with my daughter's teacher soon. How do I prepare?

A: One way to prepare is to start with the end in mind: Make a goal to leave the meeting with a list of specific ideas that will help your child do better in school.

For instance, if you're wondering about the kinds of books your youngster should check out from the library, ask the teacher for suggestions. If your child is struggling with behavior, such as talking out of turn, find out how you can work on the problem at home. Perhaps you could practice taking turns during dinner conversation.

After the meeting, talk with your youngster about what you and her teacher discussed. She may be more likely to try the ideas if she knows you and her teacher are working together. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

New twists on old favorites

When I was growing up, storytelling was a tradition in my family. I wanted to pass it on to my kids, but I found I wasn't very good at remembering or making up stories.

So I decided to use books we already had and just change them a little. It started one night with Eric Carle's *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*. The book lists things a little

caterpillar eats, like chocolate cake and a pickle. Together, my children and I made up "The Very Hungry Boys." I

read the book substituting their names and favorite foods ("On Monday, Ethan and Jake ate through one piece of pizza, but they were still hungry").

My youngsters really enjoy these twists on their favorite stories. And I'm surprised at how creative they can be when making up their own! ♥

