

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2006

Minford Primary - Kindergarten

Title I

KID BITS



Simon says "please"

Help your child remember to say "please" by playing this variation on Simon Says. Give him directions ("Turn around," "Touch your toes"), but tell him he may follow them only if you say, "Simon says please." A simple "Simon says" is not enough in this game!

A penny for your thoughts

"What do you think?" Ask your youngster that simple question, and you'll encourage her to share her opinions. For example, involve her in deciding on a gift or on dinner. She'll learn to think for herself—making her more confident now and less likely to give in to peer pressure later.

Taming butterflies

Being prepared can go a long way toward preventing stage fright. Help your child get ready for show-and-tell or a class play in steps: first performing for you, then for an audience of stuffed animals, and finally for an invited friend or two.

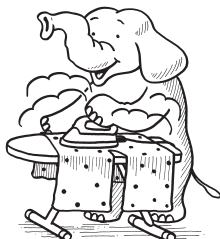
Worth quoting

"You cannot use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."
Maya Angelou

Just for fun

Q: Why are elephants so wrinkled?

A: Have you ever tried ironing one?



Get hooked on reading

Books are great teachers. Just as youngsters learn to swim by swimming and to ride a bike by riding, they learn to read by reading.

Here are some tips for using books to teach reading readiness skills to your child.

A is for alphabet

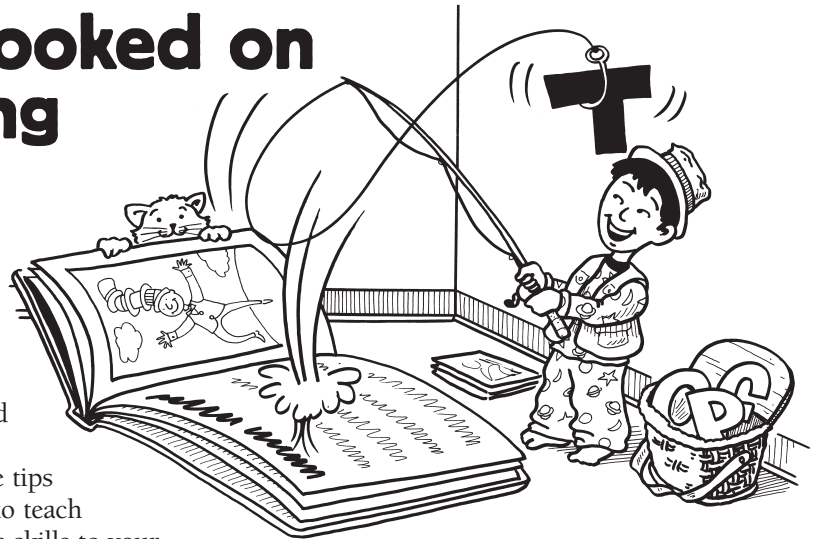
Encourage your youngster to practice his ABCs by having him look for words that begin with a certain letter. Choose "T," for example, and tell him to touch his knee each time he sees a word that begins with "T," such as "train" or "tall."

B is for book

Suggest that your child make his very own word book to keep track of words he can read. In a blank notebook, have him write each letter of the alphabet at the top of a page. As you read stories, help him write the words he knows on the proper page. For instance, "Dad" goes on the "D" page. Then, let him read you his word book each day.

C is for comprehension

Be sure your child understands what's happening in the books you read together. Stop every now and then to



help him make connections to the story: "Look—the mommy is tucking the little boy into bed, just like we do every night." ♥

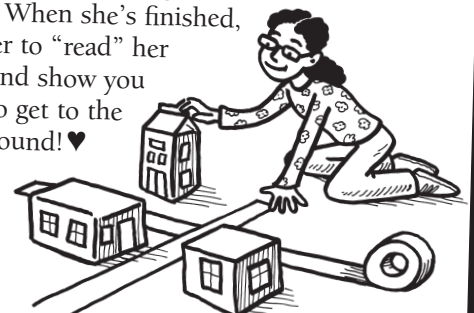
Q & A

Map it out

Q: My daughter saw me using a map the other day and asked if she could help me. How can I begin teaching her to read a map?

A: Make maps come alive for your child by helping her create a model of your neighborhood. Gather empty milk cartons and cereal boxes, and let her use construction paper and crayons to decorate them to look like buildings she knows (house, library, school).

Then, lay down "streets" on the floor (masking tape works well), and have your youngster place the boxes alongside them. When she's finished, ask her to "read" her map and show you how to get to the playground! ♥



A job well done

Gold star stickers, hand stamps, later bedtimes—these are often used as rewards for a child's good behavior or school success. There are many other ways to motivate your child to do her best. Try these ideas.

● **Tie the reward to the act.** When your youngster learns to write her name, give her a special pencil or new crayons. If she cleans up her toys without being asked, allow her extra playtime.

● **Consider "non-thing" rewards.** Display on the refrigerator a list of books your child reads on her own. If she stays quiet while you're on the phone, give her a smile and a thumbs-up sign.



● **Encourage self-rewards.** Teach your child that feeling good about something is a reward in itself. If her teacher praises her for sharing the blocks, you might say, "I bet you're really proud of yourself." If a friend's mother says how nicely your child played, ask, "Doesn't that make you feel happy?"

Note: Resist rewarding everything. If you give treats for everyday good behavior, your youngster may come to expect rewards all the time. ♥



Involve your child

When Caroline found out her mother was meeting with her teacher, she asked if she could go along. She knew the meeting was about her, and she wanted to be involved!

Although you probably won't be able to take your child with you to a parent-teacher conference, you can still make her an important part of it. Before the meeting, ask your youngster what she likes most and least about school. For instance, she may love story time but not like napping because she can't fall asleep. Tell her you'd like to share her feelings with the teacher, and ask if there's anything else she wants her to know.

During the conference, take notes on how your child is doing. When you get home, share the information with her: "Your teacher is so pleased with how well you've learned to count." ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Season by season

Bright colors and crumpled paper make this autumn activity fun for even the youngest artist. Best of all, it will teach your child about the four seasons, build small-motor skills, and encourage creativity.

Materials: white construction paper, pencil, brown crayon, colored tissue paper, glue

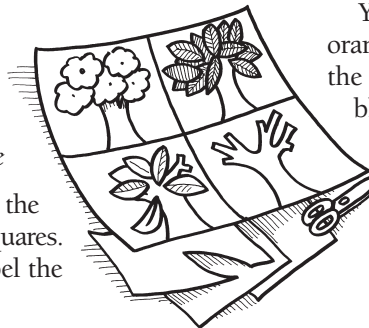
With a pencil, divide the white paper into four squares. Help your youngster label the

squares "fall," "winter," "spring," and "summer" and draw a tree trunk in each.

Next, have him tear off small pieces of tissue paper, crumple them up, and glue them above the trunks so each tree's colors represent a season.

Your child could use red, orange, and yellow paper for the fall tree. Pink could make blossoms for the spring tree, and green could be leaves for the summer tree.

For the winter tree, he could use the crayon to draw bare branches. ♥



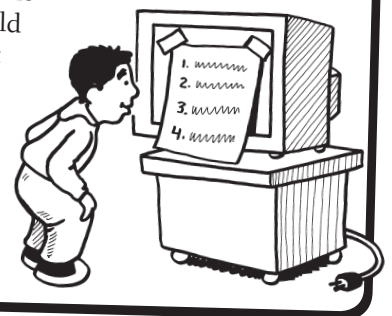
PARENT TO PARENT

Look at this TV!

When my children are bored, I tell them to go look at the television—because taped to our screen is a list of fun, TV-free activities that they helped come up with. Months ago, I had started letting them watch TV so I could get things done around the house. But I quickly realized they had it on for hours.

So I told the kids we were going to watch less television. Together, we made a list of things they could do instead and hung it on the TV. They suggested: play tag, braid each other's hair, jump rope, do a puzzle.

I try to limit their television time to an hour or less a day. Now when they're looking for something to do, they still go to the TV—but they don't turn it on! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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