

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2005

## KID BITS



### Tolerance tip

You can teach your child tolerance by modeling it. Introduce your youngster to friends and acquaintances of other backgrounds, races, and religions. Later, if he makes a comment about their differences, you might respond, "They probably think you're different, too. In what ways are we the same?"

### Wiggle words

Does your child love to dance? Turn her next jam session into a vocabulary lesson. Help her think of action words to describe her movements ("twist," "stretch," "bend," "sway"). As an added bonus, dancing will spark your youngster's creativity—and it's great exercise!

### Pick your battles

Young children sometimes act out to get attention. Try ignoring minor misbehavior, such as grumbling after being told to clean up. Instead, save the scolding for when it really matters—if your youngster hurts someone, for example, or when his own safety's at stake.

### Worth quoting

"You get the best out of others when you give the best of yourself."

Harvey Firestone

### Just for fun

**Q:** What gets wetter and wetter the more it dries?

**A:** A towel.



## Feeling at home—at school

"Home is where the heart is," the old saying goes. With a little effort, school can seem almost as warm and inviting to your child as her home. Here are some ways to help put your little one's worries to rest and get ready for the upcoming year.

### Make school a familiar place.

If you can visit before the first day, help your youngster find her cubby or other personal space in the classroom. Also, spend some time together on the school playground. You'll create good memories and give your child a comfortable place to return to.

**Work out solutions.** Jot down a list of your youngster's concerns, and help him find ways to handle them. *Problem:* What if I can't find the bathroom? *Solution:* Ask a nearby adult, such as a teacher, librarian, or nurse.

**Discuss school behavior.** Talk with the teacher about classroom rules. Then, let your child practice them at home. For example, if the teacher likes the children to sit "like a pretzel," have your youngster sit cross-legged the next time she's coloring or doing a puzzle on the floor.

*Note:* Adjustment takes time, no matter how much you prepare. Keep in mind that your child may have new concerns from time to time. If you have trouble handling them at home, ask the teacher for suggestions. ♥



### Cheerful good-byes

Whether your youngster has never been to school or is starting a new class this year, it can be hard for him to say good-bye to you. Try these ideas to ease his mind:

■ If it's okay with the teacher, hang around for a few minutes to help your child get settled. Let him know ahead of time when you'll be leaving: "I'll read one story with you, and then I'll go."

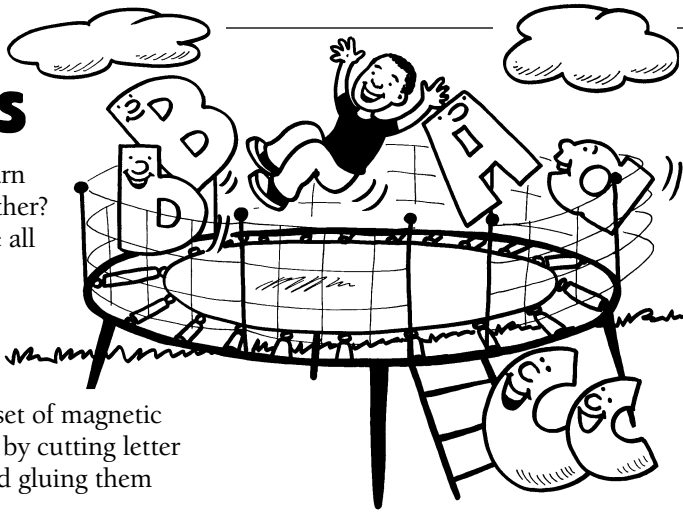
■ When you say good-bye, be cheerful and upbeat. Your youngster will be less likely to feel anxious. Then, leave quickly—don't drag it out. *Tip:* Be sure you don't sneak away. You may cause your child to not trust you. ♥



# Learning letters

Did you know that one way children learn letters is by comparing them with one another? Give your youngster the opportunity to see all 26 letters together using these activities:

- Ask your child to sort letters according to their features (curves, diagonal lines, circles). Examples: “m” and “n”; “v” and “w”; “b,” “d,” “p,” and “q.” He can use a set of magnetic or foam letters, or you can make your own by cutting letter shapes out of magazines or newspapers and gluing them onto cardboard.
- Help your youngster learn lowercase letters with this “mess free” method. Put 2 cups of finger paint, pudding, or similar

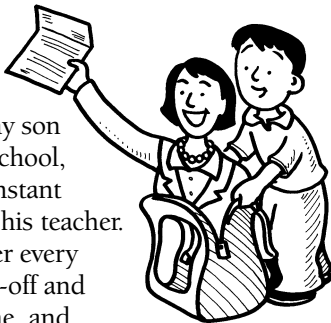


material in a quart-size ziplock bag, and seal it tightly. With your finger, trace a lower-case letter in the paint (through the bag), and ask your child to make its capital partner beside it. When she has that down, switch roles and have her make the small letters.

- Let your child type the alphabet on the computer. Then, change the letters to several different, unusual fonts. She will see that the basic features of each letter remain the same. And she'll probably be surprised that she can identify many of them, even if they look silly. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT Keeping in touch

When my son was in preschool, I was in constant touch with his teacher. I greeted her every day at drop-off and pick-up time, and we'd spend a few minutes discussing Adam's day.



When Adam started riding the bus to kindergarten, I wondered how to keep the lines of communication open with his new teacher. So, I asked her for ideas at back-to-school night.

She suggested checking Adam's backpack each day for messages from her, and encouraged me to use his backpack to send her notes. She also told me to feel free to write to her or call the school.

I've sent Adam's new teacher a note to let her know how much he enjoys kindergarten. And I'm confident that his teacher and I will stay in touch throughout the year. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Make a journal

Looking for a fun way to get your child to write? Help her create a homemade journal.

Staple sheets of lined paper or colored construction paper between two pieces of cardboard. Invite your youngster to decorate the cover using crayons, markers, watercolors, stickers, or stamps. Have her write her name on her artwork.

Explain to your child that people use journals to write about their day and express their thoughts and feelings. Talk with her about her day. What happened that she'd like to draw or write about? A very young child can draw pictures and dictate the captions to you. An older child may want to add words or short sentences below her pictures. ♥



## Q & A A healthy year

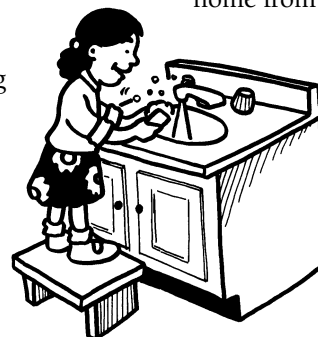
**Q:** Last year my daughter was often sick. As soon as she got over one cold, she picked up another one.

*How can I keep her healthier this year?*

**A:** Frequent hand washing is a great way to fight germs. Show your youngster how to work up a soapy lather and wash between her fingers and up to her wrists. She should wash for as long as it takes her to sing

“Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Remind her to wash her hands after using the bathroom, before eating, and when she gets home from school.

Also, tell your daughter not to share eating or drinking utensils with her friends. If she gets the sniffles, encourage her to use tissues to cover her mouth and nose when she sneezes so she won't spread germs to others. ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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