

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2018



Precious Child Care & Preschool

KID BITS

Marble painting

Here's an art project that will strengthen your youngster's hand-eye coordination. Place a sheet of white paper in a shallow box lid. Let her squirt different colors of paint onto the paper and add a marble. Then, she can tilt the lid in different directions to roll the marble and create a work of art.

Can you help, please?

Gently guide your child toward independence by encouraging him to help himself. If he says, "I don't have a bath towel," you could ask, "Do you remember where we keep the towels?" Or if he complains that the tip of his pencil broke, you might say, "Uh-oh. How can you fix it?"

Keep germs at bay

What's one thing all kids will share without being asked? Germs! Shield your child from the "generosity" of others by having her wash her hands frequently and to avoid sharing things that come in contact with someone else's mouth or face (cups, silverware, pillows).

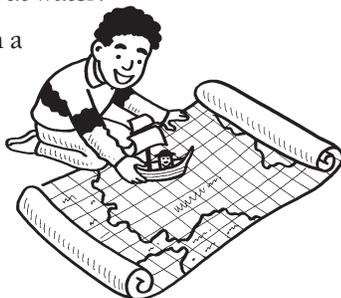
Worth quoting

"For children, play is serious learning. Play really is the work of childhood."
Fred Rogers

Just for fun

Q: Where can you find an ocean without water?

A: On a map!



Behavior tips that really work

A sense of playfulness comes in handy when you're a parent—especially for getting your little one to behave. Using make-believe or playing games can encourage cooperation and help you build stronger bonds. Consider these clever strategies that have worked for other parents.

Use stuffed animals

"I found myself repeatedly asking my son Stephen to brush his teeth or put his plate in the dishwasher. One day, I picked up his stuffed dragon and made it say, 'I'm sad. I want to read our bedtime story, so please brush your teeth.' It worked! Now I frequently ask Stephen to choose a stuffed animal that will 'remind' him to follow directions."

Be silly

"Sometimes when my daughter Emma misbehaves, I pretend she's been bitten by a 'bug.' If she won't share, for example, I'll say, 'Oh, no, the no-sharing bug got you!' Then, we pretend to swat away a bug. Often, that's enough to change Emma's



attitude so she's more open to sharing or doing whatever she's supposed to do."

Hold a contest

"My son Ben loves contests and games. So when I'm struggling to get him to do something like put on his pajamas, I'll turn it into a game. I might say, 'I'm going to go put on my PJs. Let's see if you can get yours on first!' When Ben beats me, we're both winners."♥

Talking with the teacher

Regular communication with your youngster's teacher now will make it easier to connect later if you have a concern. Need something to talk about? Try these ideas:

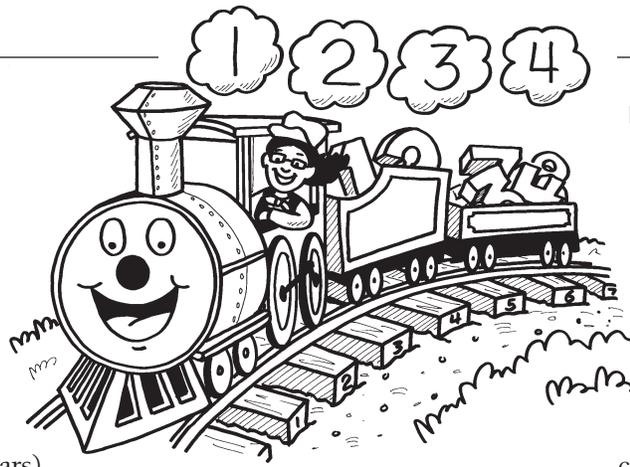
- Ask for reading recommendations. The teacher is sure to know some great books you can read aloud to your child.
- Find out what the class will study next, perhaps winter weather or fairy tales.
- Tell the teacher about activities you and your youngster do at home together like planting bulbs in the garden, coloring, or telling knock-knock jokes.♥



All aboard the number train

Choo-choo! These train-themed activities let your child write and recognize numbers—and practice counting.

Roll a railroad. Each player draws a railroad track on her own paper. Take turns rolling a die and drawing that number of train cars on your track (roll a 2, draw 2 cars). Play until everyone has at least 10 cars, then number your cars in order. Now color and cut out your cars. Mix them up, and put them back in the correct sequence.



Load passengers. Form an imaginary train by lining up laundry baskets or empty boxes. Together, write numbers (1–10) on separate sticky notes, and have your child put one note on each car. She should use the numbers to determine how many passengers each car gets. She would fill the “4” car with 4 dolls, for example. Let her pretend she’s driving the train to the station to deliver the passengers. Then, rearrange the numbers, and have her reload for another “trip.”♥



Q & A Asking to stay home

Q: My preschooler was excited about starting school, but now she sometimes asks to stay home with me. Her teacher said she seems to love school once she’s there. What should I do?

A: Since your child is happy in school, it sounds like she simply wants to be with you—which is perfectly normal. Try to set aside one-on-one time when you can, without distractions like siblings or electronics.

When your daughter asks to stay home, be matter of fact, and avoid giving in.



Instead, point out what she would miss, such as singing songs, playing in the sand and water table, and seeing her friends. Then, give her something to look forward to when she gets home. You might say, “You can help me bake banana bread for dessert” or “I can’t wait to snuggle up and hear all about your day.”

If the problem continues, follow up with her teacher.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

How to handle the news

My son Harry had nightmares after he saw news on TV about a volcanic eruption. I mentioned this to our pediatrician, and she said that while it’s important for kids to learn about their world, TV news isn’t designed for them.

She pointed out that young children believe what they see on TV is happening right here, right now. What’s more, if they see the same images repeatedly, they think the event is taking place over and over.

If Harry does view something upsetting, I can reassure him that he’s safe. So I told Harry that we live far away from the volcano. I pointed out our town and its location on a map. It’s been a week, and Harry’s bad dreams seem to be gone. And now I watch the news after he goes to bed.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

I’ve got rhythm!

Your home is full of materials that can make music. Let your youngster create his own percussion instruments and experiment with rhythm and tempo.

Instruments

● **Maracas:** Have your child put dry rice or beans into clean, empty plastic bottles and replace the caps.

● **Drum:** Get an empty coffee canister with a lid. Your youngster could cover it with construction paper and draw designs. Suggest that he use two wooden spoons as drumsticks.

Activities

● **Rhythm:** Sing a familiar song, such as “Row, Row, Row Your Boat.” Encourage your child to shake his maracas or beat his drum to the rhythm. Then, play your own rhythms for each other to copy. *Example:* Tap, tap-tap, tap, tap-tap.

● **Tempo:** Take turns playing various *tempos* (speeds) for one another to march to. Can your youngster make his feet match the beat of each tempo?♥



OUR PURPOSE

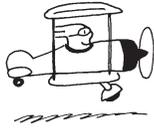
To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

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KID BITS

A growing attention span

Suggest an activity your child can do that requires a lot of concentration, such as lining up dominoes to knock down, stacking cups to build a tower, or drawing a path through a maze. Then, try not to interrupt. Staying focused on his task will stretch his attention span.

Spread the word

Here's a secret for boosting your youngster's self-esteem. Let her overhear you say positive things about her to others. ("Samantha is such a big help with her baby brother.") You'll make her feel good about herself and encourage a repeat performance of her behavior.

Winter break organization

Getting organized during your child's winter break can prepare your family to start the new year off right. Give him a sense of purpose by assigning jobs. For example, he might decorate a bin to hold hats and gloves or bag up outgrown clothes to donate.

Worth quoting

"The beginning is always today."
Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

Just for fun

Q: How do you stop a skunk from smelling?

A: Put a clothespin on its nose!



Everyday vocabulary boosters

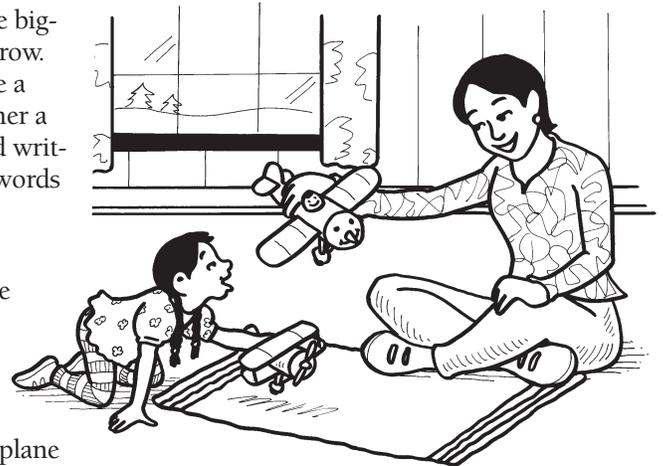
The more different words your youngster hears, the bigger her vocabulary will grow. That's important, because a strong vocabulary gives her a head start on reading and writing. Help her learn new words each day with these tips.

Comment

Talk about what you're doing or thinking when you play with your child. If you're playing airport, you might say, "The *pilot* is landing her plane on the *runway*." Or if you're building with blocks, you could tell her, "I'm making a tall tower—it's a *skyscraper*."

Add on

Look for opportunities to expand on what your youngster says, using less-familiar words. If she says, "I'm coloring the snowman's scarf red-blue-red-blue," maybe you'll add, "I like how you're *alternating* the colors to create a pattern." Or when she shares a funny story about her day, you might reply, "That's *hilarious*."



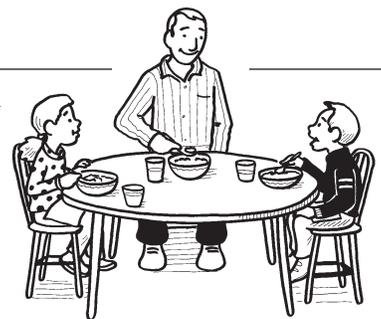
Explain

Offer a kid-friendly definition when your child asks what a word means. ("Festive describes something that feels cheerful and special.") Then, give an example that's meaningful to her. ("Your birthday party was very *festive*.") *Tip:* If you don't know what a word means, look it up in the dictionary or online together—she'll see that your vocabulary is still growing, too!♥

Make small moments count

A few minutes is all it takes to connect with your child when life gets busy. Consider these suggestions:

- Eat a leisurely breakfast with your little one. Ask what he's looking forward to that day, and tell him about your own plans.
- Declare random hug breaks. Everyone stops what they're doing and gives each other a squeeze (or two or three).
- Hold a laughing contest. Who can laugh the loudest, quietest, highest, and deepest?
- Set aside time to snuggle and tell family stories.
- Remember to say, "I love you." Simply hearing those three words reminds your youngster that he's important.♥



Celebrate diversity

Explore the world's cultures in ways your child can understand by discovering foods and games from other lands. Here's how.

Foods. The next time you and your youngster grocery shop, invite him to choose one item from the international aisle. Read the package to see where



it's from, or look it up online. Maybe you'll learn that *roti* is a kind of bread that's popular in India. As you eat it, ask him to compare it to the bread you normally buy—he might say that *roti* is flatter. *Idea:* Print out a world map, and let your child color each country you try a food from.

Games. Your youngster may be surprised that kids around the world play games similar to those he enjoys. For instance, children in Chile play a version of Duck, Duck, Goose (*Corre, corre la guaraca*), and youngsters in the Philippines play a game similar to Leapfrog (*Luksong baka*). To find more ideas, search online for "children's games around the world," or read library books. Then, pick a few to play as a family.♥

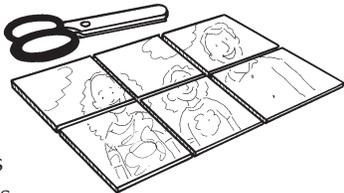
ACTIVITY CORNER

Family photo puzzles

Print extra copies of family photos, and help your little one cut them apart to create jigsaw puzzles. She'll practice visual discrimination and hand-eye coordination while she puts them back together.

Materials: photos, pencil, scissors, glue, cardboard

1. Draw lines to divide each picture into several rows and columns.



2. Have your youngster cut the photos apart along the lines.

3. Ask her to mix up all the pieces and reassemble the pictures. Suggest that she look for clues about where to place each piece. For instance, two pieces that show part of her cousin's blue dress may go next to each other.

4. Once your child knows where all the pieces belong, let her rebuild the pictures by gluing each one onto a piece of cardboard.♥



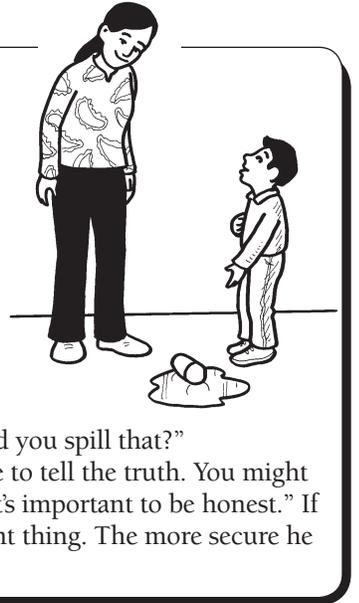
Q & A

Telling the truth

Q: My five-year-old has a tendency to avoid telling the truth when he thinks he's in trouble. I want him to be honest even when it's tough. What should I do?

A: It's common for children to fib when they don't want to disappoint a parent or face punishment. Try avoiding questions that could tempt your son to lie. Instead, focus on his actions and their consequences. For example, if he spills his juice, say, "When we make a mess, we clean it up" rather than asking, "Did you spill that?"

Another way to promote honesty is to make it safe to tell the truth. You might say, "I know it's hard to tell me what happened, but it's important to be honest." If he admits to something, let him know he did the right thing. The more secure he feels, the less likely he'll be to lie.♥



Your turn, my turn

Your youngster needs to take turns in all sorts of situations, whether she's waiting for a drink at the water fountain or playing a board game with a friend. Weave turn-taking into her daily routine with these ideas:

● Explain why your child has to wait her turn. For example, in the morning, you might point out that her brother will brush his teeth first because his bus comes earlier than hers. Then, it'll be her turn.



● At dinner, give each person at the table a turn to talk without interruption.

You can pass around a special object like a paperweight—only the person holding the item may speak.

● Take turns during your youngster's bedtime routine, too. While you read aloud, you could say, "You turn the page this time. I'll turn the next page."♥

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