

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2003



## KID BITS

### Confidence builder

You can give your child confidence when he's trying new things. How? Whenever possible, look the other way when he makes a mistake. And avoid redoing your youngster's work in front of him. You can show him the correct way at another time.

### Obeying school rules

Let your children know it's important to follow the rules at school. *Example:* If your youngsters complain that they aren't allowed to run in school, say, "The teacher's right. With so many children, it would be easy for someone to fall and be hurt."

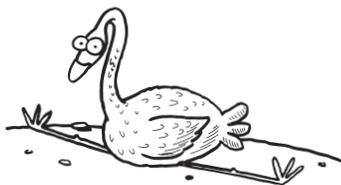
### Brush, brush, brush your teeth

To encourage your child to brush her teeth, consider these suggestions. Let her brush your teeth or her doll's teeth before you help her brush her own. Or sing a silly made-up song using a familiar tune while she brushes.

### Worth quoting

"The greatest gift we can give the next generation is the ability to laugh at themselves." *Charles Schulz*

### Just for fun



**Q:** Why does a flamingo hold up one leg?

**A:** Because if he held up both, he would fall over!

## Learning to get along

Did you know that when children have positive experiences with other children, they're more likely to do well in school? Studies have shown that they are also more apt to feel better about themselves and make smart choices when they get older.

Here are several traits you can develop in your youngster. You'll help him learn how to get along with others—and make friends along the way.

**Be a team player.** Help your youngster understand what "playing fair" means by involving him in family or group games. He will get practice in taking turns, following the rules, and being a good winner or loser.

**Offer suggestions.** Encourage your child to make suggestions instead of demands. When children are "bossy" or demanding, they are less likely to form enjoyable relationships with other kids. *Example:* "Let's both be princesses. Want to make this box our castle?" instead of, "It's my box, and I'm the princess!"



**Provide solutions.** Talk with your child about ways to solve problems that arise with playmates. For example, what if a playmate is pretending to cook and says she can't join him? *Possible solutions:* She could offer to be a customer in his restaurant, pretend to be a truck driver making a delivery, or "open" a restaurant of her own.♥

## Laughter cures the blues

You've heard the saying "Laughter is the best medicine." It's a well-known fact that a good laugh often reduces stress. As a parent, you can show your youngsters how to use humor to improve a bad day. Here's an example.

Imagine that you've just burned the meal you spent all day preparing. Rather than letting it become a disaster that ruins everyone's day, try turning it into a hilarious family memory. "This turkey's getting a big laugh today. He's thinking, 'Ha! They should've had a ham.'" Then, ask everyone what they want on their pizza!

If your children learn to see the humor in difficult situations, they'll be better prepared to cope with stress as they're growing up.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Being honest

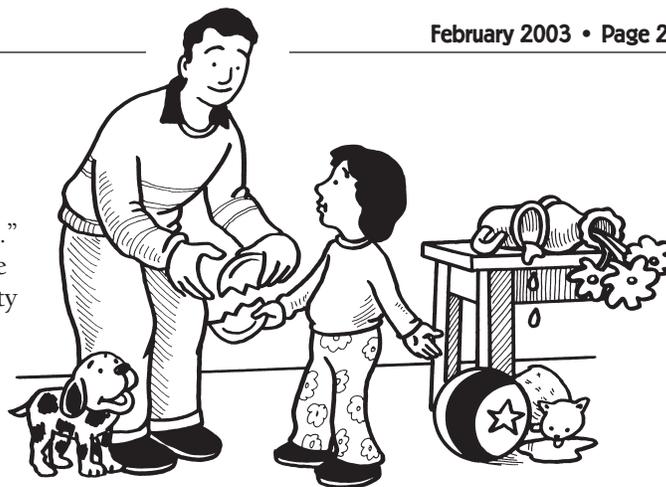
Last week, my son found the puzzle he'd been working on for weeks scattered in pieces on his bedroom floor. I knew my preschool daughter had been in his room, but when I asked her about the puzzle, she said, "I didn't do it!"

Just then, I had an idea. I picked up one of her puppets. I disguised my voice and let the puppet "talk" for me. "Erika, remember it's important to always tell the truth. The truth is telling exactly what happened. It might be scary to tell the truth, but your parents will

love you no matter what."

Later that evening, we talked about how honesty is always the best policy in our home. Erika said, "I know, Daddy. My puppet told me. I'm sorry I messed up Michael's puzzle. I didn't mean to." I gave her a big hug.

I'm not sure if the puppet did the trick or if it was what the puppet "told"

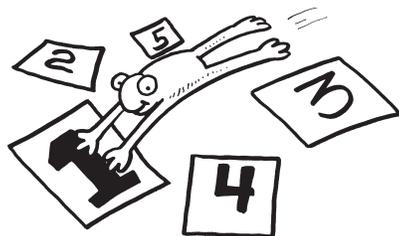


her, but the message really seemed to click with Erika. I think she liked having "someone" other than Daddy give her this important lesson. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Math moves!

This activity will get your youngster moving and learning at the same time. You'll need 10 pieces of heavy paper or cardboard and a marker.



Write the numbers 1 through 10 on separate sheets of paper. Use large numbers so they can be seen easily. Spread the sheets faceup on the floor or outside in the yard.

Call out a number and an instruction. Then, have your child find the number and follow your directions. For example, you could say, "Find the 2, and run around it two times." Other ideas include asking her to hop in front of a number or to tap her toe on a number. ♥

#### 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

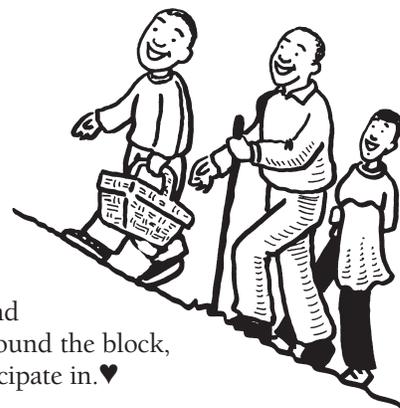
### Make time for family

**Q:** My husband and I both work. How can we make quality time for our family when our busy schedules seem to take all our time and energy?

**A:** Start by making family time a priority. Just as you set up appointments for meetings at work or visits to the doctor, make appointments for your family. Whether it's eating out, attending a school event, or seeing a movie, decide on a plan and stick with it. If you plan ahead, quality time won't fall behind.

It's also important for you and your spouse to take care of yourselves. If you're exhausted, you won't have time or energy for anyone. Be sure to eat nutritious foods and get some exercise every day.

*Tip:* Consider combining family time and exercise by planning a bike ride, a walk around the block, or a game of catch that everyone can participate in. ♥



### Let's start over

Sometimes a gentle reminder is all that's needed to change a child's behavior. When your little one needs prompting, try using the "let's start over" approach offered by Linda and Richard Eyre in their book, *Teaching Your Children Values*.

Tell your child that when you say, "Let's start over," you're giving him a second chance to respond or behave in a

better way. Then, use it the next time he misbehaves. *Example:* You ask him to put away his toys. He begins fussing, "I didn't put those toys there," and refuses to pick them up. Say, "Okay. Let's start over. Now I'm going to ask you again to pick up your toys."

This method allows you to correct your child's behavior in a positive way, while giving him the opportunity to correct himself. ♥

