

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

March 2003



KID BITS

Word + word = sentence

As your child learns to read, she'll need to recognize how words make sentences. When you read together, show her that sentences begin with capital letters and end with punctuation. You could also have her count each word while you read the sentences aloud slowly.

Family history

Do you have photographs of relatives from long ago? How about a story handed down from your great-grandmother? Show your youngster the photographs, retell family stories, and talk with him about his ancestors. He will gain a sense of belonging and security.

It's a goal!

Work with your child on setting goals. For example, does she want to learn to ride a bicycle? Help her keep track of how much time she spends practicing each day. Encourage her to keep trying. When she reaches her goal, celebrate her success!

Worth quoting

"The road to a friend's house is never long." *Anonymous*

Just for fun



Q: What's the best thing to put in a pie?

A: Your teeth!

Tick-tock, tick-tock

Learning about time

"Mom, is it time yet?" "No, honey. Ten more minutes." One minute later... "Mom, is it 10 minutes yet?"

Sound familiar? Young children often have difficulty recognizing the difference between 10 minutes, 10 hours, and 10 days! Try these ideas to help your youngster learn about time.

What does the clock say? Have your child draw pictures of things he normally does at specific times of the day. *Example:* Draw a clock face with the hands positioned at 6:00 p.m. Depending on your family's schedule, your youngster might draw himself having dinner, taking a bath, or playing with his toys.

How long has it been? Use a kitchen timer to show the passage of time. *Example:* "We can probably read this book in five minutes. Let's set the timer



for five minutes and see if we finish before it rings." Try using a timer while washing the car, playing a game, or going for a walk. Have your youngster guess how long each activity will take.

When will it happen? When talking with your child, use words that relate to time. *Examples:* "This afternoon, after lunch, we will play with Sarah." "Before we go to the park, we will visit Grandpa." "Later, we'll take some of our home-made muffins to the neighbor." ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Getting organized

I'll admit it—I'm not very organized. When I missed my daughter's soccer game again, I knew I needed help. Here's what I did.

I bought a sheet of poster board and drew six columns on it with a marker. In the left column, I wrote the days of the week. At the top of the other five columns, I wrote the name of each family member. Everyone selected a magic marker of a different color to represent his or her events and activities.

I helped the younger kids write their activities, and my oldest wrote her own schedule. The chart has been a lifesaver. Now, if I could just find my car keys! ♥



Get involved!

When a child learns something at school, it's often called a lesson. When the whole family gets involved, it could be called a learning experience!

Research tells us that a family's involvement in a child's education leads to better behavior, improved grades, and higher test scores. Here are some ways to get your family involved with your children's school:

- ▲ Offer to create a class scrapbook to record the year's events. Ask the teacher to provide photos, or offer to take pictures at each school function.



- ▲ Look for inexpensive items, like crayons, small toys, or stickers. Have your kids put the items in plastic zip-top bags and give them to the teacher. She can use the "goodie bags" as classroom rewards for good behavior or hard work.

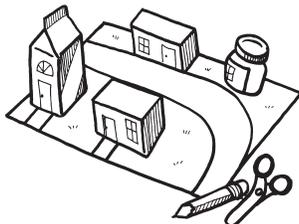
- ▲ Together, bake snacks or make crafts for a school fund-raiser. Volunteer your family for cleanup after the event is over.

- ▲ Everyone in the family can help cut yarn or shapes from paper for classroom bulletin board displays or craft projects. Ask the teacher how you can help.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Our town

This activity will give your children a geography lesson and a sense of their community.

Draw a simple version of your community on a large piece of cardboard or paper. For example, draw lines to represent streets and rectangles to show where the buildings are located.



Next, use milk cartons, shoeboxes, plastic jugs, yarn, etc., to create houses, stores, trees, and other landmarks. Glue them on the cardboard and let your children decorate them. *Hint:* Try to include their favorite places, such as the library or park.

Talk about the town you've created. Tell your youngsters the names of the buildings and where they are in relationship to your home. Does their pretend town look like their real one?♥

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 Forming letters

Q: When my child writes, her letters are different sizes and often crooked. How can I help?

A: For early writers, practice is the best way to improve handwriting. Look for inexpensive writing workbooks that show the correct formation of letters. There are also many Web sites with free practice worksheets. *Example:* www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/languagearts/handwriting.

Have your daughter work on one letter at a time so she can practice matching the shape and size of each one. As she improves, encourage her to write her name, the words for colors, and numbers.

Many beginning writers find that it's easier to hold markers or "fat" pencils. If your child is using regular pencils, make sure they're sharp and not too short. You may also want to purchase pencil grips that will help her hold the pencil correctly. She'll have better control, and writing will be more comfortable.♥



Handling angry feelings

Children don't always know how to deal with angry feelings. With your help and patience, your child will learn to handle some of his anger as he matures.



- Explain to your youngster what he may experience when he's angry. His heart may race, he may feel like yelling, his face may get red or feel hot, or his stomach may hurt.

- Let him know which behaviors are unacceptable ways to show anger. *Examples:* biting, screaming, hurting himself or someone else, kicking, throwing things, being mean to animals.

- Help your child find ways to take charge of his feelings. Suggest he do something physical, such as drawing pictures of how he feels, running around outside, or playing with clay or Play-Doh.♥