

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2002

KID BITS

Work it out

Let children solve arguments on their own whenever possible. How? When your child comes to you with a problem, restate what you hear. *Example:* "You wish your brother wouldn't make noise while you read." Then, ask her what she could do (politely ask him to stop, read in another room).

A world of good

Events in today's world can be scary for young children. Share positive stories you see on television or in the newspaper with your youngster. You'll help ease her fears by showing her there are good people in the world.

The art of reading

When your child shows you a drawing or painting he has made, ask him to tell you about it. As he talks, write down his words. Then, read his description together. He will get reading practice—and your admiration!

Worth quoting

"Hitch your wagon to a star."
Ralph Waldo Emerson

Just for fun



Q: What is a duck's favorite snack?

A: A quacker!

Teachers' wish lists

For learning success

Most of us would like the chance to have three wishes to use however we want. We asked experienced teachers to give us their three wishes for the best ways parents can boost their young children's school success. Here's a sampling.

School is cool

"I wish that parents would talk to their children about how wonderful the school experience will be. Tell youngsters that learning involves a wide variety of activities, including singing, playing games, building, coloring, and laughing. Getting children excited about learning will put them on the path to success."

Read, read, read

"I wish all parents knew how important it is to read to their children at an early age. Reading aloud to kids helps them learn listening skills, become familiar with many words, and practice comprehension and prediction. These same children are less likely to experience reading problems as they grow older."

Playtime is learning time

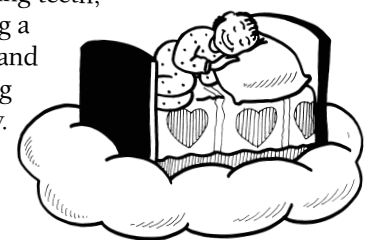
"I wish parents would give their youngsters opportunities to be around other children. Try play groups, library story times, preschools, and community programs, to name just a few. Children generally adjust better to school when they have been exposed to at least one of these types of situations." ♥



Rested and ready

Does your youngster seem rested and alert each morning? Although needs vary, experts say that children between 4 and 6 years old need 10–12 hours of sleep each night. Try these ideas to help your youngster get his rest:

- ★ Create a bedtime routine. This might include taking a bath, brushing teeth, singing a song, and reading a story.



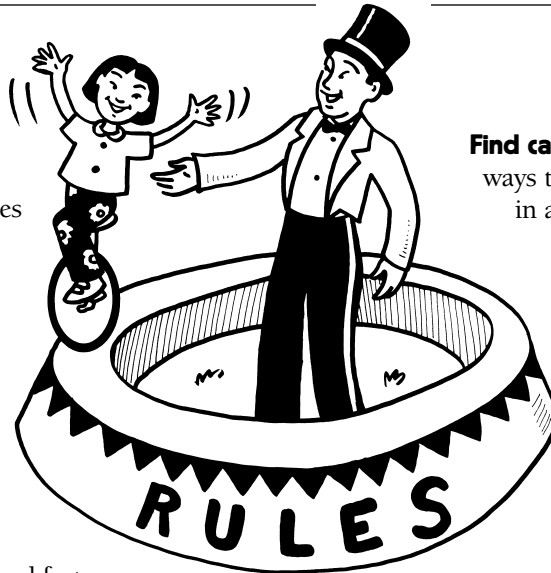
- ★ Avoid active games or television right before bed. Stick with quieter activities, like a chat on "what was special about today," or just a good snuggle!
- ★ Worries can get in the way of bedtime calm. You may want to play soothing music or use a small night-light near your child's room. ♥

Keys to self-control

Self-control is the ability to make choices about your own actions or emotions instead of relying on impulses. It's a necessary skill because it helps your child get along with others—and keeps her safe.

How can you start your child down the road to self-control? Try these suggestions.

Offer options. Whenever appropriate, give your youngster the chance to make his own choices. *Example:* "It's time for breakfast. Would you like to have juice or milk?" You'll give him practice in making decisions, as well as foster his independence.



Find calm. Help your youngster discover ways to calm himself. Spending some time in a quiet spot or holding a favorite blanket or toy can help. Even a small child can practice taking a few deep breaths or counting to 10 when he feels he's losing control.

Provide limits. Creating rules, and enforcing them consistently, will show your child that her actions have consequences. Keep rules simple, and give her gentle reminders as necessary. *Example:*

"Maria, what is our rule about running in the house?" ♥

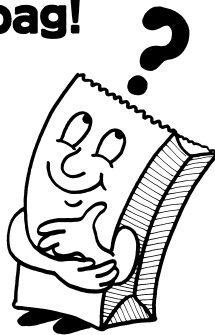


ACTIVITY CORNER

It's in the bag!

This activity will help your youngster learn to recognize the beginning sounds of words.

Find 10 small, easy-to-name objects in your home. *Examples:* sticker, napkin, cup. Place the objects in a small paper or plastic bag. Tell your youngster, "I have some things in this bag. I want you to reach in and take out one item. When you see it, tell me what it is."



After he names the item, say the name again, stressing the sound at the beginning. For example, if he takes a sticker out of the bag, ask him, "What sound do you hear at the beginning of the word? Ssss-ticker. Can you say it with me?" Continue playing until he has named all the objects. ♥

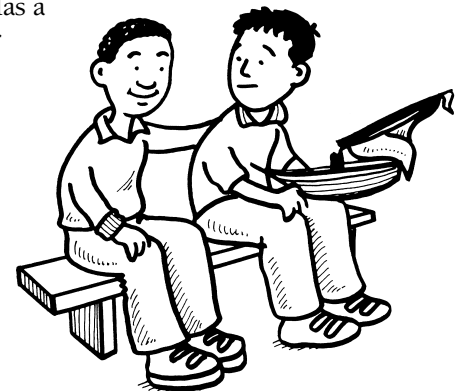
Q & A

Encouraging caring

Q: How can I help my child learn to be more considerate of other people?

A: You could start by involving him in situations where consideration is needed. Has a friend's pet died? Explain to your youngster how sad she feels. Together, visit her to express your concern. Did your son's classmate break a favorite toy? Talk about what might make him feel better. *Example:* "Your friend is upset because his toy is broken. Can you give him a hug?"

Finally, take time to talk about your own feelings and how you handle them. *Example:* "I had a rough day at work and spoke harshly to someone. Before I went home, I apologized for what I said." ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

First-day jitters

Most of us won't forget the day we "let go" of our youngsters for the first time. I certainly haven't forgotten. My daughter Betsy was unsure how her first day of kindergarten would go. I was unsure how the bus ride would go!

Betsy's teacher had encouraged us to allow our children to ride the bus if that would be part of their daily routine. I was

nervous. Little did I know that our neighbor's daughter would save the day.

That morning, she came over and asked if Betsy wanted to walk to the bus and sit with her. Betsy felt very proud of herself as she hopped up the steps to the bus. Yes, I cried a bit as I watched my little girl "grow up," but she was smiling from ear to ear. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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