

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2002

KID BITS



Make time to take time

Try to make a special time for each of your children—without their siblings. Schedule a “Mommy or Daddy time” as often as possible. Tell them how much they mean to you and that you enjoy spending time with them.

Games we play

Remind your youngster that no one wins every time. Sometimes it depends on the type of game you’re playing. Some games are based on chance (a roll of the dice), and some on strategy or skills (kicking a soccer ball into the goal).

The gift of giving

With the holidays coming up, help your child think of something he can do for others. How about helping an elderly neighbor? Perhaps he could share some cookies you’ve baked together. The neighbor will appreciate it—and your youngster will remember the smiles he brings.

Worth quoting

“Character is doing the right thing when no one is looking.” J. T. Wright

Just for fun



Q: When do astronauts eat?

A: At launch time!

Positively speaking

“What a great job!”
“I’m proud of you.”

Communicating with kids in a supportive way can make a difference in their confidence and relationships with others. Try these ideas to encourage your youngster.

Respect and courtesy

Let your child hear you speak respectfully. He is likely to model what you do and speak courteously himself. Use a pleasant tone of voice and say “please” and “thank you.”

Do versus don’t

Often, parents say “no,” “stop,” or “don’t” when their children’s behavior needs correcting. Positive talk uses many more “do’s” than “don’ts.” And telling your child what to do instead of what not to do makes her more apt to follow through. For example, say, “Give the book back to your brother” instead of “Don’t take your brother’s book away.” Reserve “no” and “stop” for emergency situations, such as “Stop! A car’s coming!”

Praise and praise again

Tell your youngster that you are proud of him. Be specific with your praise. Did he use proper manners? Try, “How nicely you asked to be excused. What good manners!”



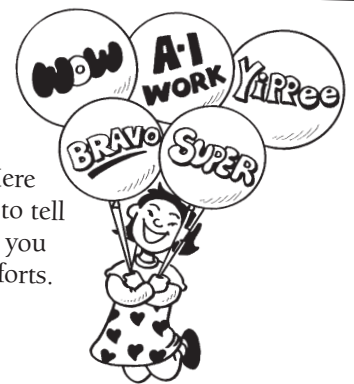
Did she make a strong effort? “Thank you for picking up the puzzle pieces. Now, let’s put them in the box.” ♥

Encouraging words

Do you often use the words “Good job!” to let your youngsters know they have done well? Here are 20 more ways to tell your children that you appreciate their efforts. Give them a try!

Wow!
Look at that!
You did it.
Super.
Super-duper.
Now, that’s impressive.
Bravo!
Excellent.
A-1 work.
Nice work.
Yippee!

Good for you.
Yeah!
Go for it!
You can do it.
Look what you can do!
Wonderful!
Fabulous.
Fantastic.
Way to go! ♥



Storytelling tips

“Tell it again! Tell it again!” Sound familiar? Children like to hear favorite stories over and over again. The experience can be even more wonderful when they practice telling stories themselves. Listening to and telling stories strengthens memory, concentration, and vocabulary skills. Here are some tips to help your youngster get started:

▲ Your child needs to hear your stories often. The repetition will help her memorize the stories and encourage her to repeat one of her favorites.



▲ Keep the stories relatively short, but provide details to make them interesting. Your child will be more likely to retell a story if you keep it simple.

▲ Give him opportunities to tell stories—on a camping trip, in his classroom, or at the dinner table. For example, say, “Why don’t you tell us about the time Grandma stayed with us because her leg was broken.”

▲ Allow your youngster to make up and tell stories of her own if she wishes. Her imagination and creativity will get a workout! ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Tub time for science

This activity can teach your youngster how the shape of an object determines whether it will sink or float. All you need is water, a metal spoon, and some clay.



Fill a bathtub, sink, or large bowl with water. Have your child drop a spoon into it. Then, do the same with a lump of clay.

Talk with your youngster about what happens. “Both the spoon and the clay sank instead of floating.” Next, help her mold the clay into the shape of a boat. Have her press the sides up and smooth out the bottom. Does the boat float? Why? (The center is hollow and full of air.)

Tip: Check out the book *Floating and Sinking* by Karen Bryant-Mole to find more experiments for your child to try. ♥

Q & A

Eating right

Q: I’m not sure if I’m serving proper portions or selecting the right foods for my youngsters. Can you offer some suggestions?

A: Young children, just like adults, should eat a variety of foods in reasonable quantities. Try these ideas to put your kids on the road to healthier eating:

- Serving sizes for young children are different from adult servings. For details, visit www.usda.gov/cnpp and click on Food Guide Pyramid for Young Children. Or contact your county Cooperative Extension System, the American Red Cross, or your local health department.
- Hot dogs and french fries are often favorite choices, but they don’t provide a balanced diet. In addition, serve fresh fruits and vegetables and protein sources like frozen yogurt, hard-boiled eggs, cheese cubes, and graham crackers with peanut butter.

Editor’s Note: Be sure to check with your youngster’s doctor before making major dietary changes. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

A preschool conference?

When our son started school, I hoped his first year would be a good one. But when his teacher asked us to meet with her, I wasn’t sure what to think.

My husband and I went together. George’s teacher told us that she likes to meet with all parents early in the year, just to see if they have any

questions, special concerns, or wishes for the year. Boy, were we relieved!

She shared some of George’s work and a couple of photographs. He was laughing really hard in one and holding hands with a friend in another. We were so pleased to know that George was making friends and having fun. We’re looking forward to our next conference. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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