

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2002

## KID BITS



### Many hands make light work

How can you get involved in your child's education? Some schools organize Parent Helper days, when parents are invited to spend time in classrooms assisting teachers. Ask the teacher or principal at your youngster's school about parent programs or other ways you can help.

### Safety first

Keep your child safe at school with these clothing tips. Floppy shoes (such as sandals) or shoes that don't fit properly might cause accidents. Baggy clothes and cords or strings on clothing can get caught in playground equipment.

### A lesson in citizenship

Here's one way to show your youngster how to be a valuable member of the community. Do you recycle? Let him sort plastics, paper, and glass (with your supervision). Explain that recycling helps his community—and the world—by reducing waste.

### Worth quoting

"Goodness is the only investment that never fails." *Henry David Thoreau*

### Just for fun



Try saying this tongue twister:  
"Eight apes ate eight apples."

## The big three

### Activities for reading, writing, and math



Marta tries to read the words on a cereal box. Sammy enjoys writing the alphabet in sand. Sally counts her blocks one by one.

Reading, writing, and math skills are easy for children to practice. And having experience with these basics will help youngsters get the most out of their first years of school. Try the ideas below to make the "three Rs" a fun part of your child's day.

**Reading.** Visit the library and let your child choose a book of his own. See if he can type the name of the book into the library's online catalog—he will get practice with letter recognition. On your way home, challenge him to find signs that have the same letters as those in his name.

**Writing.** Give your youngster a sturdy notebook or journal of her own for writing. Even if she doesn't write actual letters, pretending to write will strengthen her hand muscles and improve coordination. Another way to strengthen your child's hands is by having her trace around puzzle pieces. Then, let her put the puzzle together.

**Math.** To practice number recognition, help your child write numbers on a driveway or sidewalk with chalk. Matching is another great math activity. Ask your youngster to look for two of the same item while you're shopping (cans of vegetables, cartons of milk, or sweaters on a clothes rack). ♥

## Speech and stuttering

Some young children experience speech problems, such as stuttering. Stuttering is a break in fluent speech. For example:

- abnormal stretching of a sound in a word (ba-a-a-a-nana)
- sound or syllable repetitions (t-t-t-t-toast)
- silent blocks (child is trying to speak but cannot)



If your youngster stutters, you can help by allowing her to speak without pressure or interruptions in a calm atmosphere.

Speech troubles often disappear as children get older. But if you suspect a problem, contact your child's teacher or a speech-language therapist.

*Editor's Note:* The American Speech-Language-Hearing Association Web site offers age-appropriate activities to encourage speech and language development. Visit [www.asha.org/speech/development/Parent-Stim-Activities.cfm](http://www.asha.org/speech/development/Parent-Stim-Activities.cfm). ♥

## Sibling rivalry

Siblings can be friends for life. It's natural, however, for sisters and brothers to disagree sometimes. Sibling rivalry can be frustrating and upsetting for every member of the family. Try the following tips to bring harmony to your home.

### Don't compare your children.

Instead, remind each of them that they have special traits, and praise their accomplishments. *Example:* "Maria, you are such a patient person. And, Julie, you brought home a terrific report from school. Both of my children are really trying!"

### Stay out of "it's not fair" contests.

Explain to your kids that they have different ages, personalities, and needs. So, they may not be treated the same in every situation. For example, your oldest child may have a later bedtime than your youngest has.

**Promote sharing skills** by teaching your children about ownership. Identify everyone's belongings by labeling them or putting them in a special place. Set up rules about items to share (TV, swing set) and those that belong to a single person (a special toy or blanket). ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Mark the spot—with love!

With this activity, your youngster can give family and friends a special gift—and encourage them to read at the same time.

**Materials:** sturdy paper or cardboard, photo of your child, glue, stickers, markers, clear contact or laminating paper

First, cut paper or cardboard into a 2-inch-by-6-inch strip to create a bookmark. Help your child glue a small photo of himself on one end. Then, have him decorate the bookmark with stickers or drawings. Encourage him to write a special message on the back (or write it for him).

Finally, cover both sides of the bookmark with clear contact or laminating paper. Your youngster will have a home-made bookmark to give to a loved one—straight from the heart! ♥

#### OUR PURPOSE

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

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