

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2008

Partners In Education
Building a Bridge Between Home and School

KID BITS

Math stories

Introduce your youngster to word problems by making up questions about daily activities. *Example:* "We're going to the bank, the pharmacy, and the playground. How many stops will we make?" Encourage him to come up with his own word problems, too. ("We had breakfast, lunch, and dinner. How many meals did we eat?")

A new arrival

It's natural for an older child to feel left out when visitors come to see a new baby. To lessen jealousy, give your youngster special jobs when guests arrive. For instance, put her in charge of introducing the baby, passing around baby books (her sibling's and her own), or taking photos.

From: Me!

Making gift tags is a fun way to practice handwriting. Help your child write "To: ____" and "From: ____" on several index cards. When you wrap presents, he can fill in the blanks. Then, give him crayons and stickers to decorate the cards. Adding his personal touch will make giving more meaningful.

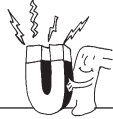
Worth quoting

"He who never made a mistake never made a discovery."
Samuel Smiles

Just for fun

Mom: You're wearing one red sock and one blue sock!

Suzie: Yes, and I have another pair just like it in my drawer.



Being independent

"I can do it!" A child who tells you this is becoming more independent—and is proud of it. Encourage your youngster to do more and more things on her own. She'll build confidence and be ready to take on new challenges at home and at school.

Learning

Teach your child to be an independent learner. If she stumbles on a word and asks you what it is, encourage her to figure it out. Ask her, "Does it look like another word you know?" To help her write on her own, print the letters of the alphabet on a sheet of paper, and hang it up where she can see it.

Playing

Show your youngster that she can have fun by herself. Ask her to think of five ways she can play alone (making clay sculptures, stringing beads). Fill a box with items for these activities and keep them handy. Then, when she says, "I don't have anything to do," suggest that she look in her box. When she finishes playing, remind her to put her things away.

Helping

Give your child new privileges. You might let her make "big kid" decisions such as how to arrange her room or whether to wear her hair up or down. Or you could let her take on grown-up responsibilities, such as preparing snacks. Show her how, and put ingredients (peanut butter, crackers) on lower shelves so she can reach them. ♥



Fun with magnets

Attract your youngster's attention to the science of magnets with these activities:

■ Together, gather small objects (penny, hairpin, paper clip, battery, marble). Ask your child to sort them by whether he thinks a magnet will pick them up. Then, give him a magnet to test his predictions. What's the same about the items that are attracted to the magnet? (They're made of metal.)

■ Have your youngster walk around the house with a metal object (spoon) to find magnets. He might realize the item sticks to a cabinet latch, a can opener, and the pen on his doodling board. And he'll see how magnets are used in everyday life. ♥



Learn to love words

Brouhaha! Xylophone! Sizzle!
Encourage your child to collect interesting words—ones that are silly, have surprising spellings, or sound like what they mean. When he sees how much fun he can have, his vocabulary will take off—*vroom!*

▲ Each time your youngster hears a word he likes, in conversation or when you're reading aloud, help him write it on a slip of paper. Search through



old magazines together, and let him cut out fun words. *Idea:* Have him look for the longest word he can find. He can store his word collection in a zipper bag.

▲ Encourage your child to use his special words so they'll become familiar. He might pick a "secret" word from the bag. In the morning, let the family know he'll be using a word throughout the day, and they can guess it at bedtime. Or he can dump his words out of the bag and use them to make up a story.

Tip: Inspire your youngster by reading *Max's Words* (Kate Banks), a story about a little boy who collects words. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Family bingo

Your little one will learn more about herself and her family and improve her listening skills with this homemade bingo game.

Materials: one 12-inch cardboard square per player, ruler, pencils, paper, bowl, pennies

Use a ruler to divide each board into nine squares (three rows across, three columns down). Have each person write her name in the middle box of a card and fill in the other squares



with facts about herself ("good swimmer," "loves animals," "blue eyes"). *Note:* Children can dictate the words if they're not writing yet.

Copy the facts onto separate slips of paper, and put them in a bowl. Players listen carefully while the caller reads them aloud, one at a time. Whoever has the fact on her card places a penny on it. The first one to get three pennies in a row calls "Bingo!" and wins the game. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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PARENT TO PARENT

A cure for whining

My daughter started whining every time she didn't get her way. I mentioned the problem to her teacher, and Mrs. Collins had several ideas for me.

First, she pointed out that Brianna might not know when she's whining. The next time my daughter whined, I said, "I can't understand you when you whine like that. Please use your regular voice."

Mrs. Collins also suggested that I let Brianna know that I understand how she feels. One day when I couldn't take her to a friend's house, she started whining. I told her, "I know you're disappointed that you can't go to Tiffany's to play today, but we'll go tomorrow."

Brianna still whines sometimes, but things are definitely getting better. I'm hoping that one day soon there will be no more whining. ♥

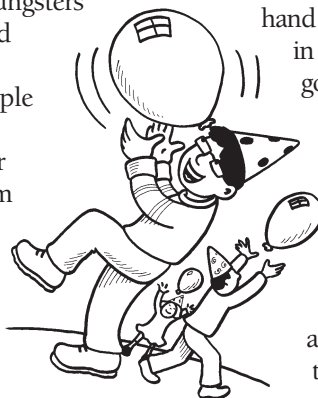


Q & A Party planner

Q: How can I make my son's birthday party special and be sure everyone has a good time?

A: Birthday parties let youngsters strengthen friendships and practice social skills.

Try to keep things simple so the party will be less stressful for you and your child. You might have him invite the same number of friends as his age (five friends if he's turning five) and keep the party short (1–1½ hours).



Plan physical activities to get guests moving and mingling. For example, play music and challenge everyone to keep balloons afloat until the song ends. Or hand out paper towel tubes wrapped in aluminum foil, and invite partygoers to sing and dance with their "microphones."

Then, let the children make their own sundaes. Give each youngster a scoop of frozen yogurt, and put out bowls of sprinkles, banana slices, strawberries, and chocolate syrup for them to spoon on top. ♥