

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2010



KID BITS

1492 vs. 2010

Columbus Day is a good time to help your youngster compare past and present. For example, when you spot an airplane in the sky or drive your car, explain that Christopher Columbus sailed to America on a ship and explored on foot. At night, discuss how explorers could see after dark (moonlight, candles).

Bounce back

When something doesn't happen the way your child planned, can he brush it off easily? Help him become more resilient by showing him how to look on the bright side. *Example:* "I know you're upset that Joey can't come over. Maybe he can play next weekend instead."

Stay informed

When your youngster brings home newsletters, forms, and announcements from school, try to look them over as soon as possible. Fill out paperwork and add important dates to your calendar (picture day, teacher work days). Finally, have your child put completed forms back into her bag so she can turn them in on time.

Worth quoting

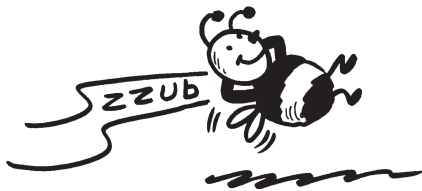
"What we learn to do, we learn by doing."

Thomas Jefferson

Just for fun

Q: What goes zzub, zzub?

A: A bee flying backward.



Partners In Education
Building a Bridge Between Home and School

A world of words

Since your child was a baby, she has been learning to talk by listening to you and others around her. Now that she can carry on conversations, you can use everyday exchanges to build her vocabulary. Here's how.

Talk. Introduce bigger words by describing what you're doing. When you wash clothes, you might say, "I'm putting in the *detergent*—that's the soap." At the gas station, you can say, "I'm going to use this *nozzle* to pump gas into the tank."

Respond. When your child talks to you, make comments that include new words. If she says, "Look at my block tower," you might say, "That is a tall *skyscraper!*" Or repeat what she tells you, replacing one of her words with a more interesting one. *Example:* She says, "This is a *good* snack," and you respond, "I agree—it's *scrumptious.*"

Explain. As you read to your youngster, pause to explain unfamiliar words.



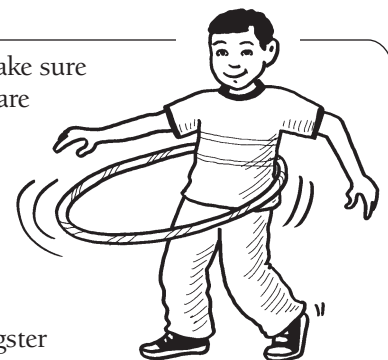
"Ruby was *certain*'—she was really sure." You might ask your child what she thinks a word means and encourage her to guess based on how it's used in a sentence or by looking at the picture. "He put the soil in a *wheelbarrow*'—do you see a wheelbarrow in the picture?"

Tip: Don't hesitate to use big words during conversations with your youngster. If she hears them often, they'll become a regular part of her vocabulary.♥

Be active

As the days get cooler and shorter, you can make sure your youngster still gets plenty of exercise. Here are some outdoor activities to do this fall:

- Visit a high school track. Can your child make it all the way around without stopping? To keep it interesting, encourage him to alternate different ways of moving (jog, skip, gallop).
- Play with a hula hoop. Suggest that your youngster twirl it around his waist, arm, or leg. He might also put it on the ground and jump in and out on one or both feet.
- Ask your child to help you with yard work, like raking leaves or pulling weeds. Race to see who can make the biggest pile.♥



Three fun family nights

Relaxing with your children can strengthen family relationships and help siblings get along better. Enjoy each other's company with these three ideas.

1. Play games

Choose a game that all ages will like, such as Uno or Sorry. Pop some popcorn and gather around the coffee table to play. Encourage your youngsters to play fairly and to focus on having fun rather than on winning. ("You two make a great team!")



2. Enjoy memories

Work together to create or update a photo album. Gather loose photos, or print pictures you've taken recently. As you organize them and put them into the album, you can discuss what you were doing in the pictures. You'll remind your youngsters how much fun they have together. ("Look—that's from the picnic when Damien found the frog under his baseball cap.")

3. Cook together

Your children can make a dish for a family meal. They might combine grapes, strawberries, and blueberries into a fruit salad, for example. Or a younger child could wash and tear lettuce for a salad, while older children carefully slice cucumbers and tomatoes to add. When you eat together, be sure to compliment their joint effort! ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

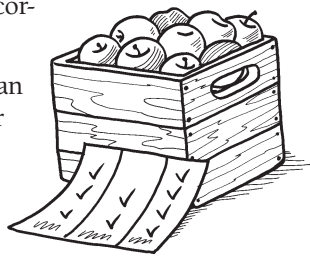
Apple lab

Apples are not only crunchy and delicious—they also make great learning tools. Get red, yellow, and green apples, and use them for these activities:

- Let your youngster practice estimating and measuring. First, she can arrange her apples by size (narrow to wide). Then, let her wrap yarn once around the widest part of each apple and cut the yarn. She can compare the pieces of yarn by lining them up, making sure the bottom ends are even. Did she put the apples in the correct order?

- Your child can learn to gather and display information by graphing apples. Have

her divide a piece of paper into three columns ("Red," "Green," "Yellow"). She can ask family members which color apple they like best. Help her gather more data by calling other relatives. Have her draw and color each choice in the correct column, count the votes, and report which apple is most popular. ♥



Q & A

We recycle!

Q: My son is learning about ways to help the environment in school. What are some simple things we can do as a family?

A: Put a recycling bin near your trash can, and ask your son to make a sign encouraging people to recycle. He might draw household items that go inside (plastic bottles, paper, newspapers). Then, help him write a message ("Recycle it!").

You can show your son that there are other ways to help the environment, too. At the grocery store, have him look for products with less packaging. For example, explain that it's better to buy one large jar of applesauce rather than six plastic cups in a cardboard box. Also, teach him to find items that can be used for a long time, like a pitcher that filters water, reusable grocery bags, and energy-saving lightbulbs. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Raising a thinker

My father-in-law, a high school teacher, recently visited us. I noticed that he asked our daughter, Mariah, a lot of interesting questions. When he saw her playing with a flashlight, he asked, "What else can you think of that lights up?" And at the park, he asked her, "How are the swings and the slide the same? How are they different?"

When I mentioned it to him, he said that he was helping Mariah think logically—a skill that is important for students. Logical thinking

includes being able to name objects that fit into a category or to explain what two items have in common, he said.

Now Mariah asks me what she calls "thinking questions." We were stuck in slow traffic the other day, and she asked, "What else goes slow?" We couldn't believe all that we came up with—turtles, snails, and even the hour hand on a clock. My father-in-law definitely sparked Mariah's thinking—and it's nice to know it's a skill she'll need throughout school. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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