

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Kids' World - St. Mark UMC  
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## KID BITS

### Parent with confidence

What do you do well as a parent? Focus on the positives in your parenting life, perhaps a fun family tradition you started or the way you've gotten your youngster to try new foods. Having a good attitude about your parenting can influence your child's attitude in a positive way!

### Shape match

Comparing shapes and sizes is an essential early math skill—and it's easy to practice with your youngster. On a piece of paper, trace around the bottoms of building blocks, cups, or containers. Then, ask her to match the objects to their outlines. Next, she could make tracings for you to match.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Little ones often use their left and right hands until they discover a preference (typically between ages 4 and 6). Be sure to let your child decide which hand to use. For example, when you give him a pencil, hold it at the middle of his body so he can pick a hand to grasp it with.

### Worth quoting

"Be silly, be honest, be kind." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What did the snail say when he found himself on the turtle's back?

**A:** Wheeeee!



## I know how you feel

Youngsters are still learning to sort out their feelings, so they may not always understand what others are going through. Try these strategies to help your child become aware of his emotions and learn to feel and show empathy.

### Looking in the mirror

Stand in front of a mirror together. Make a face that shows emotion, like an open mouth and widened eyes for surprised. Have your youngster identify your emotion. Then, it's his turn to make a face for you to name. He'll learn to "read" faces and link expressions with their emotions, which is a great way to understand how others are feeling.

### Reading deeper

When you read a book with your child, take some time to discuss the pictures. Ask him questions about the characters, such as "Look at Anna's face. Do you think she's worried or excited?"

### Listen up

Can your child follow one-step directions? How about those with two or three steps? Here are tips for helping her become a better listener.

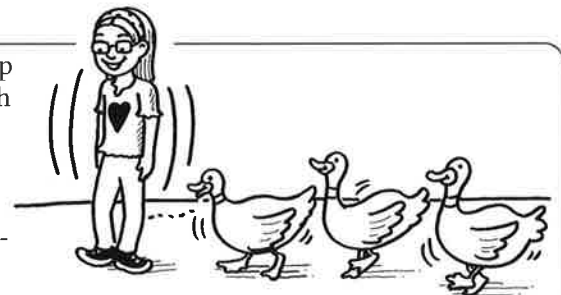
- **Cook.** While your youngster listens, read the first step in a recipe. ("In a small bowl, whisk together milk, eggs, and sugar.") Ask her to repeat what you said. Then, help her complete the task.
- **Be silly.** Build memory and concentration with three-step directions. Give your child three silly instructions to follow: "Spin three times, waddle like a duck to your bedroom, and pick out your favorite toy to play with." Now let her give you three silly directions!♥



Talk about why the character might feel that way. ("Yes, she is probably excited because she learned to jump rope!")

### Modeling empathy

You're one of the people your youngster depends on to empathize with him. Show him that you understand his emotions by validating what he feels. For example, you could say, "I understand you're mad because your favorite shorts are in the laundry. Let's find something else to wear while they get washed."♥



## Explore nature

Outdoor play lets your child discover what nature has to offer. Encourage a love of the outdoors with these activities.

**Go on a hunt.** Search your yard or park for bugs. Your youngster could look in bushes, under rocks, and on trees. Ask her what's different and similar about the creatures she finds. She might notice that some have wings to fly (dragonflies) but others crawl around on legs (caterpillars) or without legs (worms).



**Plant a garden.** Start a small garden of fall flowers, herbs, or vegetables in your yard or in containers. Check to see what will grow in your area this time of year—perhaps cabbage or chives. Your child can care for her plants and spot changes. *Tip:* Suggest that she record her observations in a notebook.

**Feed the birds.** Have your youngster make a bird feeder by spreading nut or seed butter on a paper towel tube and rolling it in birdseed. Thread about 3 feet of string through the tube and tie the ends together. Hang the feeder on a nail or tree branch. Your child could draw or snap photos of the different birds that come to visit each day.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Toss and move

This life-sized board game will build your youngster's coordination and large motor skills.

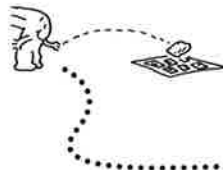
**Materials:** 3 sheets of construction paper (cut into fourths), marker, tape, beanbag, timer, active toys



Think of 12 challenges for players to complete, and write each one on a separate piece of paper. *Examples:* "Count how many times you can bounce a ball." "Time how long you can balance on one foot." Tape the pieces of paper together into a game board.

Take turns tossing the beanbag and doing the activity it lands on. Then, the other players do the same challenge. Whoever wins the challenge (stands on one foot the longest, bounces a ball the most times) earns one point.

Keep going until you've finished all the activities. The player with the most points wins!♥

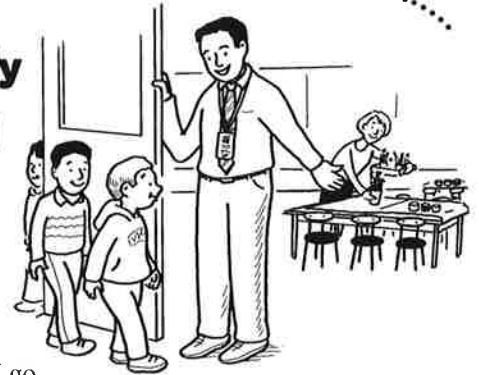


## PARENT TO PARENT Work-friendly volunteering

I work during most of the hours my son Charlie is in school. At the beginning of the year, I asked his teacher how I could still be involved with his class. Mr. Roberts gave me a few great ideas that fit into my schedule.

One suggestion is helping to get the classroom ready in the morning. Twice a month, I go about 15 minutes before class starts to set up the calendar and lay out the morning's activities so the teacher is free to greet his students. Mr. Roberts also had ways I could volunteer from home, such as cutting and laminating game pieces for lessons, compiling book orders, or washing dress-up clothes.

Charlie's teacher is always grateful for whatever time I can squeeze in each week to help him. And I'm glad I have a new way to show my son that I care about his education!♥



## Q&A Bored? No way!

**Q:** My daughter often complains she's bored and asks to play with my phone. How do I handle this?

**A:** Believe it or not, boredom can be beneficial for children. It's tempting to turn to screen time when your youngster says, "There's nothing to do!" But letting her work through her boredom gives her the chance to use her imagination.

Gently guide your daughter to come up with her own

ideas. You might say, "I wonder what you could do with the pillows and blankets in this closet?" That may lead her to build a fort or a pretend snowman.

Or have your child make a craft box filled with stickers, crayons, paper, craft sticks, and glue. It can

inspire her to get creative when she's bored—and even keep her from asking for your phone.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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