

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2018



KID BITS

Drink up!

Little ones are more susceptible to dehydration than older children are. When the temperature climbs, remind your child to take water breaks during outdoor play. You might help him set up a “Hydration station” with plastic cups and a pitcher of water so he can serve himself like a big kid.

Teacher goodie bag

Some of the best end-of-year gifts for teachers are supplies to use in class next year. Have your youngster decorate a paper lunch sack and fill it with pencils, crayons, stickers, or notepads from a dollar store. Help her add a thank-you note, too. She can deliver the present on the last day of school.

Positive talk

Your child will respond better if you tell him *what to do*, rather than *what not to do*. For instance, say, “Walk, please” instead of “No running!” or “Put your toys away” rather than “Stop leaving your toys everywhere.” Negative instructions (ones beginning with *stop*, *don't*, or *no*) rarely tell him how to fix what he's doing wrong.

Worth quoting

“Reading gives us someplace to go when we have to stay where we are.”
Mason Cooley

Just for fun

Q: What's the easiest way to catch a whale?

A: Have someone throw it to you.



Kids' World - St. Mark UMC
Ms. Susan Fennell, Director

Messy outdoor learning

Would your youngster like to paint with her toes, make mud, or smear shaving cream on a window? Now that warmer weather has arrived, head outside for messy learning fun all summer long.

Colorful shape painting

Finger paints aren't just for fingers. Spread paper on the ground, and add blobs of red, yellow, and blue paint. Then, let your child paint shapes with her toes. Call out a shape and a color. Can she create a blue triangle? Which colors would she combine to make a green circle or an orange square? She could experiment to find out.



Muddy counting

Together, mix up a bucket of mud using soil from the backyard and water. Afterward, play this version of hide-and-seek to practice counting. Ask your youngster to close her eyes while you stir a few plastic toy animals into the mud. Tell her how many to dig out with her

hands. She'll need to count the toys as she goes to make sure she finds them all.

Foamy ABCs

Squirt shaving cream into your child's hand, and have her smear it on a window or glass storm door. Now it's a “canvas” to write on. Take turns using a finger to write the alphabet in order, one letter at a time. Draw a picture of something that starts with each letter. For *B*, she might draw a bike. *Note:* Erase, or add more foam, when you run out of room.♥

Looking ahead to next year

The move to kindergarten or first grade means your child's school day will change. Here are things he may face and ways to smooth the transition during the summer.

- **All-day school.** You might need to adjust your youngster's bedtime so he gets more sleep and has energy to learn.
- **No nap.** Phase out your child's midday nap, or move it to after-school hours.
- **Larger building.** Tour the school to help him feel comfortable.
- **Lunch in a cafeteria.** Set up a pretend cafeteria at home and role-play together. Take turns being a cafeteria server, cashier, lunchroom aide, and student.♥



Playtime tips for tired parents

It's playtime. Your child is a bundle of energy, but you're worn out from a day at work. Sound familiar? Use these ideas to connect with him after a long day.

Take a supporting role. Volunteer for a quiet part in your youngster's game. If he wants to be a doctor, you could relax in a chair and be his patient. Or you may be the police officer directing traffic while he zooms around with his toy cars.



Try sit-down activities. Have him make a tabletop version of bowling with dominoes as "pins" and a small ball to roll toward them. Or hold a mini "puppet show." Sit near a lamp, and use your hands to create shadow puppets on the wall for each other—can you make a rabbit, a duck, or a bird?

Add play to routine tasks. Turn dinner into a picnic with stuffed

animals. Or combine a guessing game with making the grocery list. You provide clues ("We need your favorite square breakfast food"), and let him figure out what you should write (waffles).♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Imagination boxes

I learned this trick from my daughter Hannah's preschool teacher. The classroom has a stack of plastic boxes filled with items to play scenarios, such as "post office" or "marching band." Hannah loves these boxes so much that we decided to make some at home.



First, Hannah wanted a "bank" box. We decorated a cardboard box, and she added pretend money, a calculator, paper and pencil, and some used gift cards for "credit cards." We also found items to create boxes for "zoo," "school," and "grocery store."

We plan to add more boxes to Hannah's collection over time. She likes being able to grab a box and have everything she needs to play!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

How long? How much? How heavy?



These simple activities will introduce your little one to measurement concepts.

Length: Ask your child to line up her crayons from shortest to longest. She'll practice comparing lengths—and see right away which colors she uses the most and the least.

Volume: Give your youngster a 1-cup measure and two different-sized containers. How many cups of water does she think each will hold? She can count as she pours to see how close she came. Repeat with other containers, and she'll see her estimates getting more accurate over time.

Weight: Play "Which is heavier?" Let your child fill two identical bags with toys. She might put dolls in one and toy cars in the other. Have her hold one in each hand and say which feels heavier. Then, help her weigh them on the bathroom scale to check.♥

Q & A

Finding a sitter

Q: How can I find babysitters for evenings or weekends? And how can I make sure they'll take good care of my son?

A: Word of mouth is often the best way to find a sitter. Ask friends and neighbors who they use or whether they have children in high school or college who can babysit. If your son is in day care, his provider might be able to sit or to recommend a sitter.

Start by calling potential sitters until you find one who sounds like a

good fit for your family. Then, have her come over so you can watch her play with your child. If you like what you see, try her out. Write down instructions ("Please give Tommy a rice cake and milk around 7 p.m."), and go over rules ("You can use your phone after bedtime, but no guests").

Afterward, ask your youngster what they did and if he had fun. If he seems comfortable with the sitter, you might hire her again.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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