

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2018



KID BITS

It takes a village

School events are great for getting to know other parents. Take time to introduce yourself to a few people and exchange contact information. You'll develop a network to turn to for carpooling, babysitting referrals, or discussing parenting concerns that crop up.

Food allergies

Sharing snacks or lunch can be dangerous for kids with food allergies. Be sure your youngster knows not to offer her food to others. If she has a food allergy, she should say, "No, thank you," if someone wants to share with her. Even if the item looks safe, it could contain an ingredient she's allergic to.

DID YOU KNOW?

Students who build good attendance habits in preschool and kindergarten are more likely to graduate from high school. Make sure your little one goes to school every day unless he's sick or there's a family emergency. That way, he will understand from the beginning that regular attendance is important.

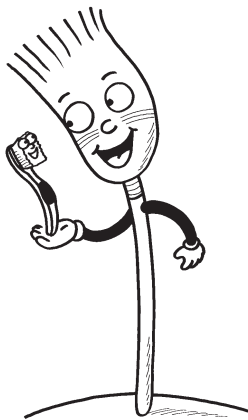
Worth quoting

"If you think you can do a thing or you think you can't do a thing, you're right." *Henry Ford*

Just for fun

Q: What did the toothbrush want to be when it grew up?

A: A broom!



Reading, reading everywhere

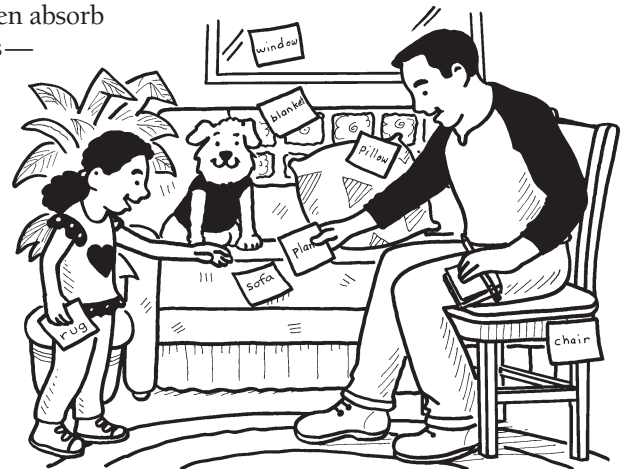
"I know that word!" Children absorb words from their surroundings— simply by seeing them every day. And they feel proud as they begin to recognize more and more words. Try these ideas to fill your home with print for your youngster to read.

Label household objects

Write the names of household items (*lamp, door, couch, table*) on separate sticky notes. Help your youngster post each word on the correct object. She can walk around the house and read the words anytime she likes. Once she thinks she can read them when they're not matched with the items, remove them, and let her try. Now, make labels for other objects.

Decorate with print

Encourage your child to hang printed items in her bedroom. For example, put up a calendar so she can read the names of months, days, and holidays. She might also display a postcard from her cousin or a poster from a movie she saw. Invite her



to point out words she knows, such as her cousin's name, and then you could read any unfamiliar words to her.

Create a book

Let your youngster use a binder to make a coffee-table book full of words she knows how to read. She'll love flipping through and reading the book all by herself. Help her cut out words from food packages (*soup, rice*), magazines, or catalogs. Slide each word into a plastic sheet protector to put in her book.♥

Learn at clean-up time

Simple household tasks teach kids so much more than just how to keep things neat and clean. As your youngster pitches in, help him build these skills.

- **Following directions.** Take his learning to the next level by giving two- and three-step directions. *Example:* "Please put the blocks in the bucket, and then put the bucket in the hall closet."
- **Becoming independent.** Assign your child age-appropriate jobs that he can do on his own, such as dusting the furniture or folding towels. Avoid correcting him, and he'll see himself as capable of doing things without you.
- **Cooperating.** Ask him to help with bigger jobs like changing the sheets on his bed or cleaning out the inside of the car. He'll practice working as part of a team.♥



Healthy technology habits

Is it okay for little ones to spend time on computers, tablets, and cell phones? It depends on how and when they use them. Consider this advice for helping your youngster use technology in appropriate and positive ways.

Make it meaningful. Your child will benefit more from technology if he uses it with you for real-life purposes. You might video chat with relatives to stay in touch. Or help him type his questions (“Why do leaves change colors?”) into a search engine, and read the answers together.



Encourage real play. Kids this age need plenty of active, hands-on playtime to develop their brains and bodies. Suggest alternatives to screen time, such as playing Solitaire with actual cards rather than on an app.

Be a role model. Let your little one see you limiting your screen time. For instance, put away your cell phone while you talk to him, or silence it and place it in a special basket during family time like meals and read-alouds. You’ll send the message that people are more important than screens.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Cause and effect

“What will happen if I jump in that puddle?” Here’s how to help your youngster understand cause and effect, or the idea that one thing leads to another—an important science concept.

Point out something that happened, such as your youngster’s sneakers being soaking wet. Now, take turns naming possible causes. Stretch her thinking by being creative. Maybe she jumped in a puddle, spilled a drink on her feet—or forgot to take off her shoes before getting in the bathtub! Talk about which cause is most likely. If it rained recently, the puddle explanation probably makes the most sense.



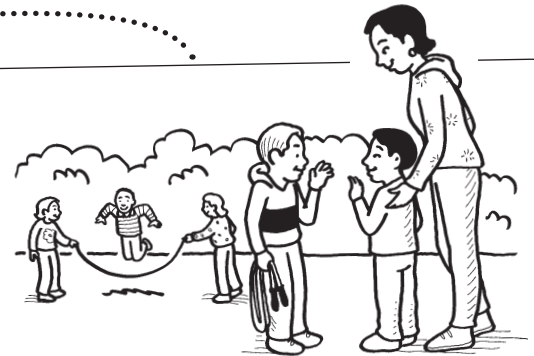
Look for other opportunities to explore cause and effect with your little one. If a balloon pops, ask what caused it. Did someone stick a pin in it, or did a hippopotamus sit on it?♥

Q & A

Can I play?

Q: I’ve noticed that my son is hesitant to join other kids at the playground. What should I do?

A: Asking to join a group takes courage. Your child may need adult help at first, so try walking with him to approach other kids. Then, stand by until he’s settled. Once he’s comfortable joining in with your support, he’ll be more likely to do it on his own.



At school, he could start by asking just one child to play. When that feels natural, he might try two students, then three. He may also be more confident joining a group that includes at least one person he knows well.

Remind him that others might want to play with *him*, too. If he notices another student watching him jump rope, he can ask, “Do you want to jump with me?” Later if that student is playing in a group, it may be easier for your son to join in.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Smoother mornings

Breakfast battles, sock hunts, and half-packed backpacks were making school mornings stressful for my daughters and me. Natalie, Maya, and I needed a better routine, so we had a family meeting to brainstorm solutions.

Natalie suggested making breakfast the night before. Together, the girls decided they’d put cereal boxes, bowls, spoons, and bananas on the

table in the evenings. Then Maya said they could lay out their outfits at bedtime—including socks and hair accessories. Finally, we agreed to keep everything they take to school by the front door.

Now, Natalie and Maya set the breakfast table and pack their backpacks after dinner. They’re also enjoying modeling outfits as they decide what to wear. No more last-minute chaos for us!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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