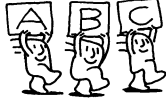


Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2017



KID BITS

Be a good sport

Playing games with your child gives you a chance to demonstrate good sportsmanship. Remind everyone to stick to the rules and play nicely. End games on a positive note whether you win or lose. For instance, say, “Good game. Thanks for playing,” and encourage your little one to do the same.

Safety smarts

In stores, teach your youngster to spot employees with uniforms and badges, and explain that he should approach them if he gets lost. Also, help him memorize your phone number. Write each digit on a separate index card, and let him practice putting them in order.

My math “collection”

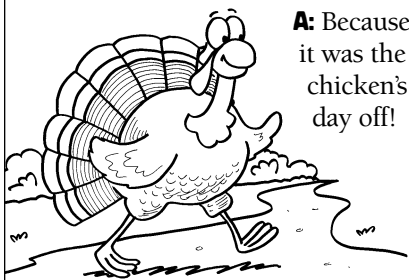
Organizing and playing with a collection of small objects is a fun way to work on early math skills. Suggest that your child gather up stickers, toy cars, or bouncy balls. Then, let her use an egg carton, a muffin tin, or an ice cube tray to sort and count her treasures.

Worth quoting

“The teacher is one who makes two ideas grow where only one grew before.” *Elbert Hubbard*

Just for fun

Q: Why did the turkey cross the road?



A: Because it was the chicken's day off!

Exploring feelings

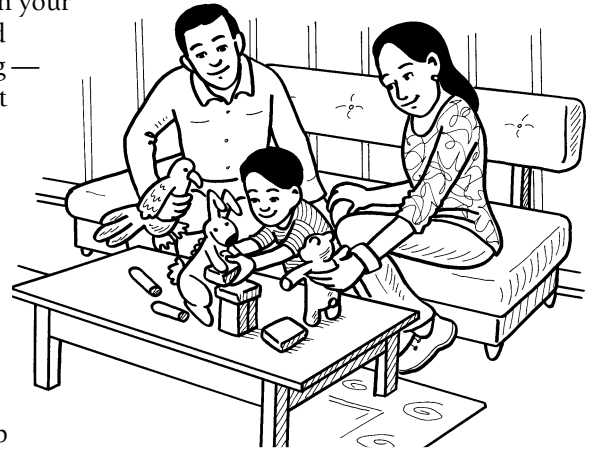
Developing empathy starts with your child's being able to recognize and understand how others are feeling — a tall order for someone who's just beginning to grasp his own emotions. Use these activities to build empathy.

Sing a silly song

This twist on “If You're Happy and You Know It” helps your youngster name feelings. Replace *happy* with a different emotion (*excited*, *sad*) and the action (“clap your hands,” “stomp your feet”) with “make a face.” Both of you should make a face that matches the feeling. For “If you're *surprised* and you know it,” you could open your eyes and mouths wide. Then, pick another emotion, and sing again.

Act it out

Enjoy this game to show your little one that people don't always feel the same way. Take turns naming something (spiders, brussels sprouts, haircuts), and have everyone act out how



they feel about it. One person may act scared of spiders, for example, while another might show curiosity. Try to guess each other's emotions.

Use your imagination

Pretend play lets your child put himself in another person's shoes. While playing with dolls or stuffed animals, you could say, “The parrot feels mad that the bunny knocked over his blocks.” Your youngster might add, “The bunny feels sorry, and he's going to rebuild the tower.”♥

Let's go to the library

Show your youngster that the library is a wonderful place to read and have fun by making regular trips there. Here are tips:

- Let your child sign up for her own library card. It's free, and she will feel grown up when she uses her card to check out books.
- Browse the library's calendar to find events she would like, such as craft workshops, story times, and puppet shows.
- Have your youngster invite a friend along. A library playdate encourages children to enjoy books together.
- Hold a “treasure hunt.” Take turns picking things to find, perhaps a magazine with “kids” in the title or a biography of a scientist. Your child will get to know the library's different sections.♥



Learning on your feet

Some days it may seem like your little one came with a built-in case of the wiggles. The upside? Young children often learn best when they are moving around. Try these active skill-building ideas.

Letters and numbers. Ask your youngster to use chalk to draw the alphabet in a long, winding path on the driveway or sidewalk. Have her hop to each letter, naming it as she lands. Next, she can make another path, this time writing numbers (1–10 or 1–20) to count as she jumps.



Colors and shapes. Combine actions with colors or shapes for your child to find in your house or yard. You could ask her to jump to something green (a bush) or tiptoe to something square (a table). Now she gets to tell you what to look for and how to move to it. *Tip:* Once she has mastered this, give her

two-step and then three-step instructions (“Gallop to something blue, and march to something round”).♥

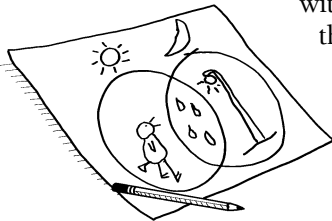
ACTIVITY CORNER



Daytime, nighttime

What does daytime look and sound like? How about nighttime? Invite your child to explore differences between day and night with this project.

Help your youngster draw a Venn diagram—two giant circles that overlap in the middle. He should label one circle with a sun and the other with a moon.



In the morning, snuggle together

near a window

or on a porch to observe sights and listen to sounds. In his “sun” circle, have him draw pictures of what he sees (shadows) and hears (the “peep-peep” of birds). Do the same thing at night. In his “moon” circle, he could draw bright streetlights or an owl hooting in a tree.

In the space shared by both circles, encourage him to draw what he observed both times (rain falling, trees rustling in the wind).♥

Q & A

How to tame interruptions

Q: My son often interrupts when I’m talking to someone. It makes having a conversation challenging. What can I do?

A: Youngsters always seem to be bursting to tell you something the moment you start talking to anyone else. It is possible to limit the interruptions, though.

Show your son a polite, quiet way to get your attention. Maybe he could put his hand on your arm or hold your pinky finger. Then, use another signal to let him know you’ll give him a turn to talk soon. You might pat his hand or nod. When you reach a stopping point in your conversation or hang up the phone, give your child your full attention while he talks.

Waiting politely takes practice, and your son may need a few reminders. But once he knows how to get your attention, he’ll be less likely to interrupt.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

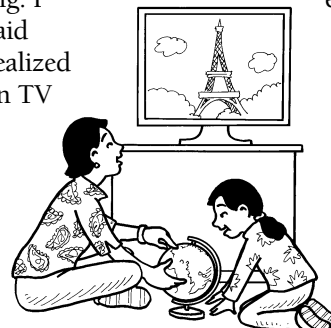
Make the most of TV

One day while my daughter Rachel was watching TV, she accidentally turned on the closed-captioning. I offered to turn it off, but she said she liked seeing the words. I realized this was an opportunity to turn TV time into learning time.

Rachel enjoyed telling me which words she recognized, and I pointed out new ones for her to learn. When the commercials came on, we talked about the show.

I suggested that we each try to predict what would happen next and tell what clues we used from the program. We enjoyed seeing how close our predictions came—and making new ones.

I know it’s important to limit Rachel’s screen time, but I’m happy to make the time she does spend watching TV a little more educational.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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