

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

March 2009

Kids' Discovery Days



## KID BITS

### Spring fever cure

Does your youngster have spring fever? Help her go happily to school by showing interest in her day. *Example:* "I can't wait to hear about the games you'll play!" Also, plan special time together after school or in the evening. You could read a book outside or look for signs of spring (birds in trees, grass getting greener).

### No littering

Show your child that he's old enough to start taking care of the earth. Let him tuck a plastic grocery bag into his pocket when you take a walk or visit a playground. He'll have a portable trash can for tissues and snack wrappers, and he'll learn to reuse shopping bags.

### Muscles for writing

Children need strong finger muscles to write and draw. Give your youngster practice by letting her help you do things around the house. She can open a jar, wring water out of a washcloth or sponge, pour juice into a cup, or turn a lamp on or off.

### Worth quoting

"Fall down seven times, stand up eight."

*Japanese proverb*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What animal never needs a haircut?

**A:** A bald eagle.



## What do you think?

What's the secret for raising a child who can solve problems and think creatively? Here are activities to try and questions to ask that will stretch your youngster's mind.

### Encourage creativity with interesting projects.

You might give your child a ruler and a block shaped like a triangle. See if he can make a seesaw and balance it using small objects such as pennies and buttons. Or give him graph paper and crayons to create a mosaic-style picture. He can color in one square at a time to make letters, houses, or animals.

### Teach your youngster to solve problems independently.

If he misplaces his cup or pencil, for instance, you can ask questions to lead him to the missing item: "When did you last have it?" "Where were you standing when you were using it?" He'll gradually learn to work through the process himself.

### Show your child that questions can have more than one answer.

Ask him to hold up five fingers. (He'll probably put up all the fingers on one hand.) Then, ask if he can show you five fingers in a different way. If he isn't sure what you mean, hold up one finger on one hand and four on another, or two on one and three on the other. Repeat the game with other numbers. ♥



## Showing your love

"I love you!" Let your youngster feel your love with these heartfelt gestures:

- ♥ Mail her a note from your office to your house.
- ♥ Make snack time special by eating together on a park bench or in a blanket fort.
- ♥ When your child is playing, ask if you can play, too.



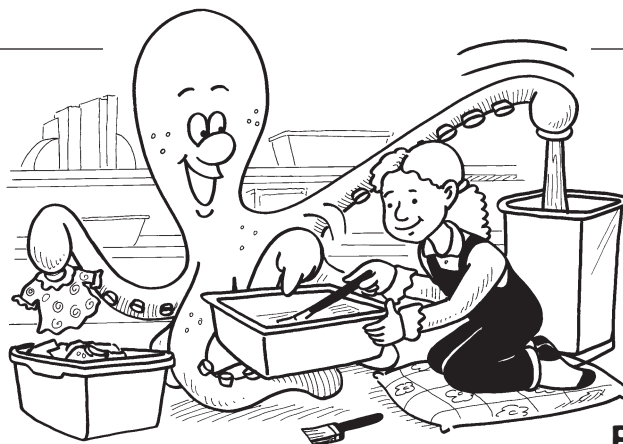
- ♥ Pull your youngster onto your lap, and tell her the story of the day she was born.
- ♥ Let her hear you say nice things about her to others.
- ♥ Start each day fresh. Even though your child misbehaved yesterday, let her know today will be great. ♥

## Learn to be organized

Spring cleaning is a great time to teach your child organizational skills. You can also squeeze in some reading, writing, and math practice. Try these suggestions for storing school supplies and toys.

### Home office

Teach your youngster about size and shape by helping her fit school supplies into containers. Give her empty, clean food



boxes and cartons. She might put paper in a rectangular cracker box and markers in a frozen juice can. Find a special spot in your house to store her supplies (a corner of the kitchen, a play table in her room). She can use her “office” for drawing, writing stories, or homework.

### Playroom

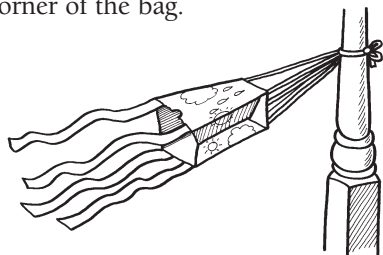
Encourage your child to sort items according to characteristics they share. Ask her to think of categories for her toys (pretend food, doll clothes, building materials) and to place each kind into a different bin. Then, help her make labels for the containers so she’ll know what’s inside. When she wants to play with a particular toy, she can read the labels to find it.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Watch the wind blow

Make a wind sock with your youngster so he can “see” the wind blow in different directions.

**Materials:** paper lunch bag, crayons, crepe paper, four 2-foot pieces of string

Cut the bottom off the bag and let your child decorate it with weather-related pictures (clouds, raindrops, snowflakes). Then, cut four strips of crepe paper, each twice as long as the bag. Help your youngster staple them so that one hangs from each bottom corner of the bag.



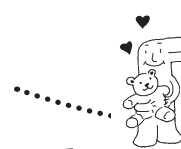
Next, punch a hole at each corner of the top of the bag, and knot a piece of string through each hole. When all four strings are attached, pull them up and tie them together.

Hang the wind sock on a tree or porch column, and look at it each day. Explain that the wind sock blows in the direction the wind is moving.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Q & A

### A balanced diet

**Q:** My daughter only wants to eat pasta and cereal. How can I help her branch out?

**A:** Start by explaining that everything she eats fits into food groups (milk, meat and beans, fruits, vegetables, and grains). To be healthy and strong, she should eat items from each group every day.

Together, read books like Lizzy Rockwell’s *Good Enough to Eat*, or view a “food pyramid” designed just for preschoolers ([www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers](http://www.mypyramid.gov/preschoolers)). Your daughter will learn how many servings she needs from each food group.

Then, help her make food group charts for a few days. She can draw pictures for each food group (glass of milk, hamburger) across the bottom of a sheet of construction paper. When she eats something, let her place a sticker in the correct column. At bedtime, have her count the stickers for each food group. Did she eat enough servings from each one?♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### A timeline of my life

My son Jasper is making a timeline at school. All year, the students have drawn pictures of things they’ve done. At the open house, his teacher explained that the class project helps the children learn about sequencing.

So we decided to make a timeline at home. We went through our family pictures and asked Jasper to pick his favorites. He chose photos from his first birthday party, his first day

of preschool, and our family trip to the beach.

Jasper glued each picture on an index card. Then, I asked him to arrange them on a long sheet of paper in the order of when they happened.

Finally, I wrote dates below the pictures and had him dictate a sentence to go with each one. Jasper shared his timeline at school, and then we hung it in his room. I wonder what picture he’ll add next!♥

