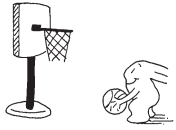


Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2018



Little School of the West
Deborah Hagen, Administrator

KID BITS

My own business card

Creating a pretend “business card” is a fun way for your child to learn her address and phone number. Show her a real one (yours, one from an office you visit), and then have her make her own using an index card. Help her write her name, address, and phone number. She could draw a small picture (ballet shoe, soccer ball) to show something she does.

A gracious host

Having friends over lets your youngster practice social skills. Explain that it’s nice to let his guest take the first tricycle ride, for example. Make sharing easier by allowing your child to put away one special toy before his friend arrives—everything else is for both youngsters to enjoy.

Not afraid of the dark

Help your child overcome her fear of the dark by making it “friendlier.” Try decorating her ceiling with glow-in-the-dark stars from a dollar store, or give her a night-light for her room. She may also feel better cuddling a stuffed animal who “likes” the dark, perhaps an owl or a raccoon.

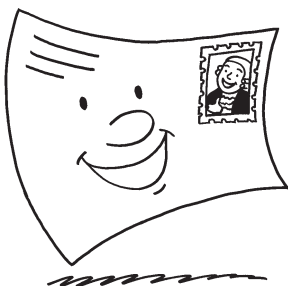
Worth quoting

“Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere.” *Chinese proverb*

Just for fun

Q: What did the envelope say to the stamp?

A: Stick with me, and we’ll go places.



Playful ways to boost self-control

Little ones learn many skills through play, and self-control is no exception. These games and activities can help improve your youngster’s ability to slow down and think before he acts.

Stop and go

Name an action for your child to do, such as jumping up and down. Every time you call out, “Go,” he should start jumping. When you say “Stop,” he stands still. But if you say a random word instead of “Go” and “Stop” (“Bananas,” or “Jupiter,” for example), he should ignore you. He’ll need to listen carefully so he knows whether you’re giving a command—or just being silly!

Be a mirror

Face your youngster, and strike a pose. Maybe you’ll stand with one hand on your hip and the other on your head. Ask your child to copy you. Now, slowly move to a new pose while he moves with you as your mirror. He’ll practice



resisting the urge to make any other movements—after all, a mirror reflects only what’s in front of it.

Count down

In a situation where your youngster tends to get antsy (say, waiting for food at a restaurant), have him pretend he’s an astronaut. Suggest that he put on his imaginary spacesuit and get ready for launch. Slowly count backward from 10 together. This will give him a chance to settle down. ♥

Reasons to write

Your child is probably excited about learning to write. Whether she’s just making squiggly lines or starting to form words, here are ways to nurture her new skill:

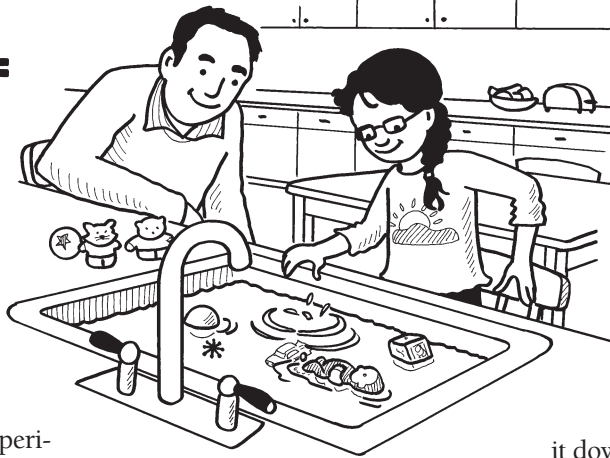
- Write lists together. Your youngster could list animals she’d like to visit at the zoo, jobs she might have when she grows up, or rainy-day activities to try.
- Let her leave messages for family members. You can help her spell the words on a sticky note (“Let’s play a game!”) and find a place to put it where it will be found. Or give her dry-erase markers to write a greeting on a window or a bathroom mirror. She can easily wipe off the glass when she’s finished. ♥



More curiosity = more learning

“Why are the trees bare in winter?” “What are clouds made of?” Kids this age wonder about everything—and that’s good, because curiosity fuels learning. Try these suggestions to feed your youngster’s natural inquisitiveness.

Encourage exploration. Hands-on experiments can satisfy your child’s curiosity and lead to new things to wonder about. For instance, if she wants to know whether toy cars will float, let her test them



to research on your next visit to the library or when you’re online together. That will give both of you a chance to learn new things—and your youngster will see that even grownups are still learning.♥

in a sink. As she experiments, she might wonder which of her other toys will sink and which will float. After she tries them, ask her what the toys that float or sink have in common.

Find out together. Don’t worry if you’re not sure why we get hiccups or why lightning comes before thunder. You can simply say, “That’s a good question. Let’s write it down.” Keep a notebook full of questions



PARENT TO PARENT

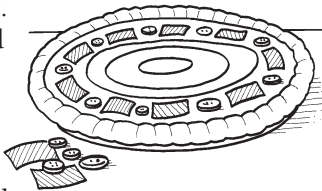
Artsy patterns

My grandson Noah loves doing arts and crafts with me. He’s learning about patterns in school, so I thought our projects could be a great way to practice patterns at home.

I suggested that we color together in my “grown-up” coloring book. I started coloring a swirly design, alternating its stripes purple, blue, purple, blue. I asked Noah to color the next stripe in the pattern, and he made it purple.

Then, Noah wanted to make his own patterns. I gave him craft supplies like crepe-paper scraps and buttons, and he glued them in a pattern around the border of a paper plate.

Now Noah points out patterns to me all the time—in the scarf I’m knitting, on my couch where we snuggle up and read, and on a cake we decorated together!♥



Q & A

Advice for parent volunteers

Q: This month, I will be volunteering in my daughter’s classroom. What should I expect?

A: It’s great that you’re going to help your daughter’s teacher. Your youngster will feel proud to see you in her classroom, and volunteering is one way to show her that you care about her school.

When you arrive at school, go to the office first, since you may need to sign in and get a badge. In the classroom, the teacher will explain what to do. She may have you work with a small group of children, perhaps doing jigsaw puzzles or making a snack. Or maybe she’ll ask you to make copies or cut out letters and numbers. After you leave the classroom, be sure to keep information about the students confidential.

Note: If you have younger children at home, arrange for someone to watch them while you volunteer. Consider swapping child care with another parent who volunteers at a different time.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Parachute games

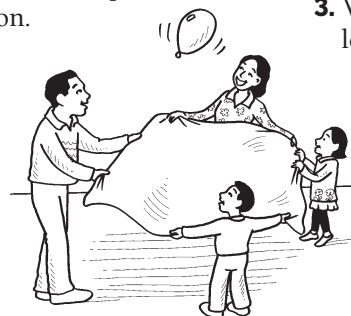
You and your child can play parachute games at home with just a flat bedsheet. Have each family member hold one side of the sheet, and enjoy these activities that promote cooperation and coordination.

1. Take turns deciding how everyone will move the “parachute.” Lift it up high, or make low waves, for example. Keep going until everyone has had a chance to give an instruction.

2. Place a ball on the sheet, and lift to roll the ball from player to player. Your child can count how many times the ball is passed before it falls off. How high will he count?

3. Work together to launch a balloon as high as possible.

4. Fill the center of the sheet with “popcorn” (several crumpled sheets of paper). Everyone shakes the sheet and calls, “Pop, pop, pop!” until all the popcorn “pops” off the parachute.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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