

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2010



KID BITS

Nap time

Has your little one stopped napping now that she's in school? An earlier bedtime may help her adjust to longer days. You might also schedule 30 minutes of quiet time before dinner. She can lie on the floor or in bed while she does puzzles or looks at books.

My address

Your youngster will have fun learning his address with this "knock knock" joke: "Knock, knock." "Who's there?" "Ricky." "Ricky who?" "Ricky who lives at 1234 Elm Street." For extra practice, repeat the "joke" with other family members' names.

School clothes

The right clothing can keep your child comfortable while she learns and plays. Consider casual clothes that can get messy. She'll also need a jacket or sweater in case she gets chilly. And sneakers will keep her safe and active during outdoor playtime, recess, or PE.

Worth quoting

"America's future walks through the doors of our schools each day."

Mary Jean LeTendre

Just for fun

Q: Which hand is better to write with?

A: Neither—it's best to write with a pencil.



Off to school

Build excitement about school, and your child will be eager to start each day! Try these tips for a great year.

Show interest. Be excited about what your youngster does at school. In the morning you might say, "It will be fun to paint on the easel today" or "Maybe you'll play firefighter in the dress-up area." After school, follow up by asking about those activities. ("What did you paint?" "Who played dress-up with you?")

Practice at home. Keep school supplies, including crayons, markers, paper, scissors, and glue, handy at home. Your child can work on what he learns in class and try new projects. If he brings home a teddy bear puppet, for example, he might make a different animal puppet and have the two carry on a conversation.

Keep up attendance

Children who regularly attend school learn more and feel more connected to school. Start now to teach your child good attendance habits.

- Show your youngster that getting to school on time is important. If you're running behind, you might say, "Let's get up earlier tomorrow. Walking in late interrupts your teacher and your friends." When she arrives on time, she'll be able to put away her belongings, greet her teacher and friends, and start morning activities.

- Limit days off by keeping your child home only for illnesses and emergencies. That means scheduling doctor and dentist appointments after school when possible and scheduling vacations for school breaks. By being in class every day, your youngster will get to participate in every lesson and stick to her daily routine. ♥



Enjoy it together. Plan family fun that's related to what your youngster is doing in school. If his class is studying the letter B, say each other's names with a B at the beginning (David would become Bavid), and serve burritos with beans for dinner. When he learns to mix colors, see how many different-colored pancakes family members can make with red, yellow, and blue food coloring. Your child will see that learning continues when the school day ends. ♥



Enjoying the library

Make library visits an adventure for you and your child. Here are three ideas:

1. Listen to stories. Hearing adults read aloud can teach your youngster to read, too. Find out when story time is held and whether you need to sign up in advance. Or you and your child can snuggle in a comfortable library chair while you read aloud.



2. Invite a friend. The library is a good place for your youngster to spend time with a classmate. She'll discover that it's fun to share stories with someone her age, and she'll also be motivated to read more. Suggest that they take turns reading pages of the same book or sit side by side and read different books. If they're not reading yet, they can use the pictures to quietly tell stories.

3. Use resources. Explain to your child that the library's computers can help her find books. Ask a librarian to show you how to use the database. Then, practice searching for books about a topic your youngster picks (unicorns, robots).

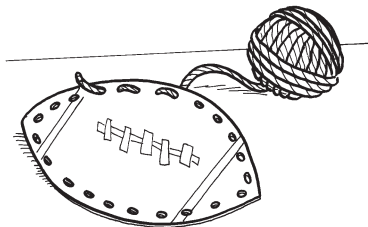
Tip: Find out if your library has a bookmobile. Your child will be excited to read books that she checked out in a moving library.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Lace it up

Give your youngster's hands a workout. This sewing activity will improve his strength and fine-motor coordination, which will help him with tasks like writing and tying his shoes.

Make sewing cards by cutting the front and back panels from cereal boxes. Draw a large shape (star, football) on the back of each piece, and let your child color it. Then, cut out the shape and help him use a hole punch to make holes around the edges. Next, cut a 30-inch piece of yarn for each shape. Wrap tape tightly around one end to make it pointy, and tie a knot in the other end.



Show your youngster how to lace the yarn through the holes: push the taped end up through one hole and down through the next, pull it tight, and repeat (he can say, "up, down, pull, up, down, pull"). When he's finished, have him store the cards in a zipper bag so he can unlace them and sew another time.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

How can I help?

I was excited about volunteering at my son's school this year. Since I work part-time, I asked his teacher, Mrs. Flynn, how I could help. We decided that I would visit a couple mornings a month, plus do some projects from home.

On my first day, I made copies of the class newsletter and organized math and science supplies. The next time, I read one-on-one with students and played board games with a few children. And last weekend at home, I e-mailed other parents to recruit volunteers for a field trip.

Mrs. Flynn said she really appreciates parent volunteers because they allow her to spend more time with each student. And I'm glad my son is seeing that his school is important to me.♥



Q & A Exploring cultures

Q: My daughter has come home from school asking why some of her classmates look different or speak a different language. How should I respond?

A: Being around children from many cultures will help your youngster understand that differences are a part of life. If she asks about someone's skin color or clothing, point out that her classmates have a lot in common (collecting trading cards, eating pizza), as well as

things that make each person different (parents from Nigeria, grandparents from Korea).

You can also teach your child about cultures represented in your town. Visit a Chinese or an Indian market and let her pick foods to try, such as lo mein noodles or curry sauce. Or you might take her to a Latin music festival. Your youngster will discover more about the world while learning to respect differences.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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