

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2007

UMES Child & Family Development Center  
Ms. Donna Long, Director

## KID BITS



### Year-end conference

Schedule an end-of-year conference to review your youngster's progress and prepare for next year. Before your meeting, write down a few questions for the teacher: "What has my child accomplished this year?" "What should we work on over the summer?" Thinking ahead now will help your youngster get off on the right foot in the fall.

### Time-in

Here's a new behavior trick to try: Give your child a "time-in" rather than a "time-out." Before getting into a tough situation, say, "We'll have to wait in a long line at the store. Let's sing three songs together before we go in." It will be easier for your child to be patient—and she'll have fun.

### Going to work

The world of work can be a mystery for young ones. Explain that grown-ups work to earn money so they can buy things. Give examples, too. An hour of work might buy a pizza for dinner or a gift for a friend's birthday. You'll help your child understand why you go to work.

### Worth quoting

"Mistakes show us what we need to learn." *Peter McWilliams*

### Just for fun

**Q:** How did Thomas Edison invent the lightbulb?

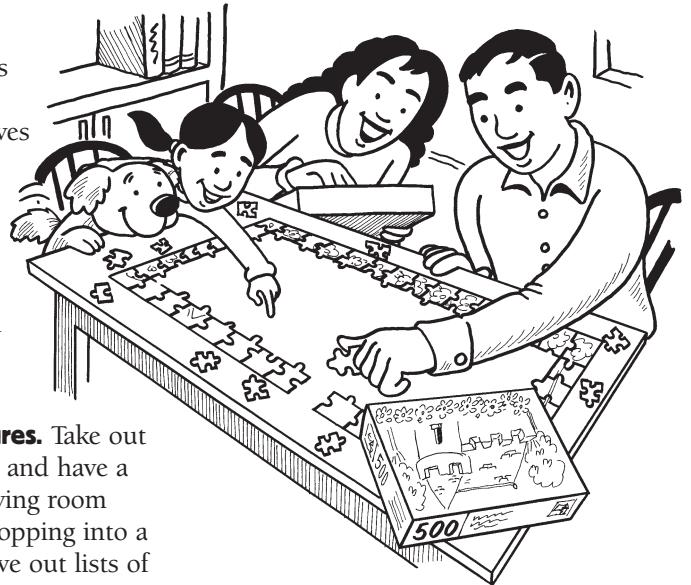
**A:** He had a bright idea.



## Building family bonds

Stacy's family includes Stacy and her mom. Jack's consists of his mom, dad, and brother. And Molly lives with her grandparents.

These three families may be different, but they all have built strong bonds by spending time together. You can focus on your own family with these ideas.



**Create everyday adventures.** Take out sleeping bags or blankets, and have a family sleepover on the living room floor. Or make grocery shopping into a family scavenger hunt. Give out lists of items for each person to spot as you go up and down the aisles.

**Be spontaneous.** If a song you love comes on the radio, turn it up and dance—your child is guaranteed to laugh and might even join you. When you're driving, pull over in a safe spot to let everyone watch a beautiful sunset or see a family of ducks at a pond.

**Start rituals.** Give your youngster something to look forward to by playing a game before getting ready for bed each night. Take a family walk after dinner to enjoy the fresh air, or work on a giant jigsaw puzzle over several evenings.

**Do special things.** Schedule a "date night" with your child once a month. Write a letter to her every year on her birthday, and save the letters to give her when she is older. ♥

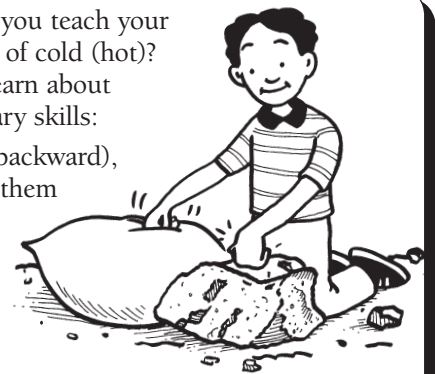
## Vocabulary time

"If you're not cold, you're \_\_\_\_." How do you teach your child to finish this sentence with the opposite of cold (hot)?

Here are activities to help your youngster learn about opposites and build his thinking and vocabulary skills:

■ Let him see opposites (walk forward, then backward), hear them (talk loudly, then quietly), and feel them (have him touch a hard table and a soft stuffed animal).

■ On an index card, sketch a bird and clouds to suggest "up" in the sky. On the other side, draw a bird eating crumbs "down" on the ground. Repeat with other examples. ♥



# Add words to pictures

Your child probably loves to draw pictures. Show him ways to add words to his pictures, and he'll get writing practice each time he draws.

## Letters

A beginning writer can start with his name. Each time your youngster draws a picture, write his name on the paper, saying each letter as you go. Soon he'll try to write it himself.



## Words

Once he's forming letters, help your child label items he draws ("house," "sun," "kitty"). He can sound out the words and write the letters he hears. It may help if he has a copy of the alphabet nearby (write the letters neatly on a sheet of paper).

## Sentences

If your youngster is already writing words, help him add sentences below his drawings. Ask him to tell you what is happening in the picture. Together, think of a way to explain it in one sentence: "Mommy, Daddy, and Max are going for a walk." Help him keep his letters straight by drawing a line at the bottom for him to write on. ♥



# Q & A Show-and-tell

**Q:** My son's teacher has asked that children not bring toys for show-and-tell. What else can he take?

**A:** Your youngster's teacher knows children feel good about sharing things that mean something special to them. Here are some ideas.

**Books.** Have your child practice showing the cover and a few pages. Telling what the story is about will help build reading comprehension skills.

**Nature.** Explore the outdoors together, and gather acorns, buds, or leaves. Your youngster's classmates will probably want to know what they are and where he found them.

**Souvenirs.** Help your child choose a T-shirt, some seashells, or a map from a family vacation. He can tell classmates what sights he saw or who he visited.

**Hobbies.** Your youngster could talk about his karate class. He might take his karate outfit and demonstrate a move. ♥



# PARENT TO PARENT

## Magazine mania

At the library recently, I told the librarian that my daughter Kayla seemed bored with reading, and I asked her to recommend something new. I was surprised when we were taken to the magazine section. The librarian explained that magazines are great for young children because they can browse the pages, look at pictures, and find articles to read aloud.

She suggested *Turtle*, which has stories, poems, recipes, games, and activities. She also said my daughter might like the short stories and puzzles in *Humpty Dumpty*. Kayla loves animals, so she looked through two wildlife magazines, *Click* and *Zootles*.

Magazines have turned out to be a great way for my daughter to learn more about the world around her. Plus, they've gotten her more interested in reading! ♥



# ACTIVITY CORNER

## Sprout in a bag

Let your child see a plant grow—roots and all—right before her very eyes.

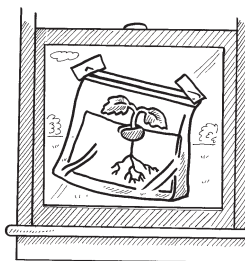
**You'll need:** three lima bean seeds, paper towel, quart-sized zipper bag

Start by having your youngster soak the seeds in water overnight. The next day, let her wet a paper towel and fold it in the bag. Have her put the seeds on the towel, making sure she can see

them. Finally, help her seal the bag and tape it to a sunny window.

In a few days, roots will begin to grow down into the towel. Next, a stem will grow up, and finally, leaves will appear on the stem. Explain to your child what helped the plant grow (water, sunlight), and point out its parts (seed, roots, stem, leaves).

**Note:** To make the plant live longer, help your youngster put it in a pot with soil. ♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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