

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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UMES Child and Family Development Center  
Dr. Donna Long, Director

## KID BITS



### Coat trick

Teach your youngster to put on his own coat. Have him lay it—upside down and open—in front of him, with the hood or collar touching his toes. Then, he can bend down, put his hands into the armholes, and flip it over his head for instant success!

### Savings spot

Help your child learn to budget by having her save part of her allowance for a special treat. Give her an envelope to store the money. On the outside, she can glue a catalog or magazine picture of what she wants (jewelry-making kit, dance bag), and write the price. When she has saved enough, she can buy it.

### Healthy eyes

Did you know that children's eyes develop rapidly from ages three to seven? Your youngster needs clear vision, strong eye muscles, and good eye-hand coordination for reading and writing. Ask his pediatrician about a vision screening to detect and correct any problems.

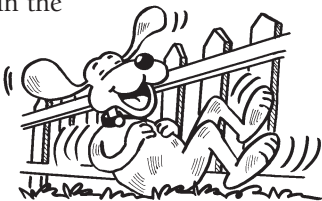
### Worth quoting

"Each day comes bearing its own gifts.  
Untie the ribbons."  
*Ruth Ann Schabacker*

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do you stop a dog from barking in the front yard?

**A:** Put it in the backyard!



## Learning to write

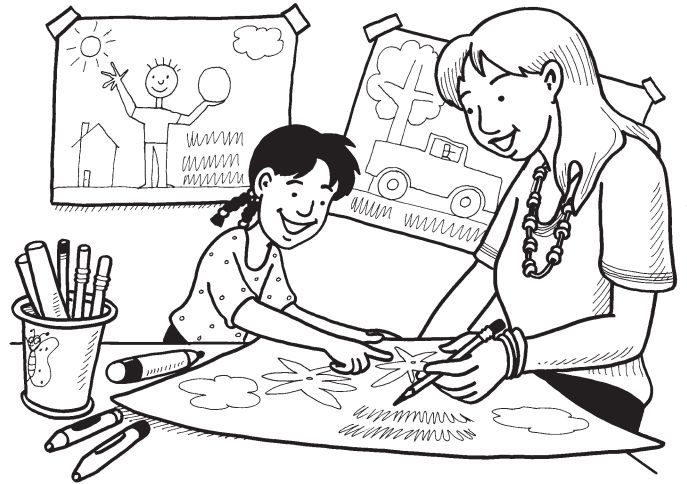
Help your child develop a love of writing by working with her as she learns to put her thoughts on paper. Try these steps:

**1.** Before your youngster learns to write, you can write for her. When she draws a picture, ask her to tell you about it. Print what she says, word for word: "The flowers make the butterflies happy." Read the sentence back to her, pointing to each word as you say it. She'll see that she can use writing to say what she's thinking.

**2.** Once your child can form some letters, she can write with you. If she dictates "Malia likes dolls," have her print her name, and then you write the rest. Writing together will give your youngster confidence to write on her own.

**3.** Next, you can encourage your little one to start sounding out words. Ask her to say them aloud slowly and to listen for any letters she hears. Consonants are more obvious than vowels, so she might write *lv* for *love* or *dnr* for *dinner*. Soon she'll learn to use vowels, too.

**4.** Eventually you'll see your youngster adding words—and then sentences—to her



pictures without your prompting. Ask her to read her work to you, and don't worry about misspellings. She'll spell more words correctly as she learns to read. For now, praise her efforts—she's writing! ♥

## Book care

Teach your youngster that books are like friends—they deserve respect. Share these rules so he can enjoy his stories again and again:

● Keep books safe by storing them on a shelf or in a basket.

● Use a bookmark instead of folding page corners. *Tip:* Your child can make his own bookmark by decorating a strip of cardboard with stickers.

● Wash hands before reading.

● Make a doctor's kit for books that are accidentally damaged. Fill a toy doctor bag or other container with cellophane tape for ripped pages, masking tape for torn spines, and an eraser to remove marks. ♥

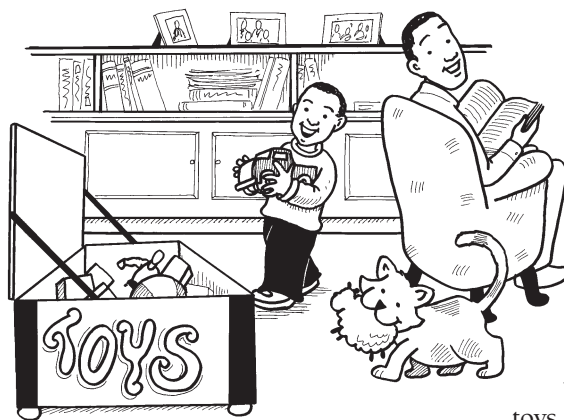


## Better behavior

Children who learn that their actions have consequences are more likely to think twice about their behavior. Here are some ideas to consider when disciplining your youngster.

### Natural and logical

Natural consequences happen automatically—no punishment required. For example, if your child forgets his show-and-tell item, he won't get to share it at school. Of course, some results have to be prevented, such as getting hurt by playing in the street. That's where logical consequences come in: "If you don't stay on



the sidewalk, you'll have to put your scooter away and do something else."

### Fair and reasonable

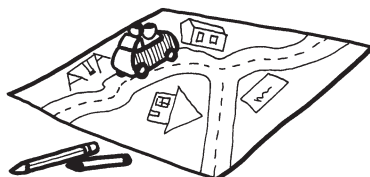
Try to choose consequences that fit the situation. Say your youngster refuses to put away his favorite toys. Making him go to bed early wouldn't be related to what he did, but taking the toys away would. Then, decide on a reasonable length of time—he might not play with them the next day, not two weeks. That way, he has a chance to try again soon to do the right thing.♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER Make a play mat

Make playtime more interesting by helping your little one create and use her own play mat. She'll learn about "setting"—the place where a story happens.

**Materials:** poster board, crayons



Let her draw an imaginary town on poster board. She can make streets and then add houses, shops, a school, and police and fire stations.

When the mat is finished, you can play with it together. Each of you can choose a toy figure and a vehicle and act out a story. For example, maybe a little girl is walking home from school with her mother and sees an ice cream truck. Point out that her play mat is her story's setting—just like the settings (forest, farm) in the stories she reads.♥

## Q & A Social studies fun

**Q:** My son sees his older sister on the computer and wants to use it, too. What kind of online activities are appropriate for a preschooler?

**A:** Start by looking for Web sites on a topic your son might be hearing about. For example, with Election Day coming up, he may have heard adults talking about presidents, states, and history. Now is a good time for him to learn more about his country. Here are three Web sites for you and your youngster to visit together:

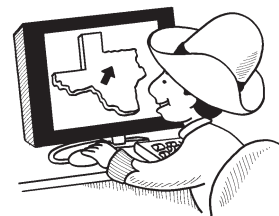
★ Does your child know that the president's dog can have a homepage? He can find it at [www.whitehouse.gov/kids](http://www.whitehouse.gov/kids), where

he can also tour the White House and play the dog's matching game.

★ The Puzzled States game at [www.scholastic.com/play/aboutUs.htm](http://www.scholastic.com/play/aboutUs.htm) asks players to move states onto a blank map. Help your youngster find his own state after completing the puzzle.

★ For a trip through history, try [www.americanhistory.si.edu/kids/index.cfm](http://www.americanhistory.si.edu/kids/index.cfm). Your child can build a pioneer house or paint a buffalo hide.

**Tip:** Monitor your children when they're online so they only visit Web sites that are appropriate.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT Different places, different people

Recently my daughter Becky has started noticing people who look and dress differently. She asked me why our next-door neighbors don't look like us. I wanted her to understand that people from many cultures live in our community, and her teacher gave me an idea.

The next time Becky asked to draw with her markers, instead of giving her the whole box, I gave her only one color. It wasn't long before she complained that she didn't have enough colors. "I need green and brown for the trees and blue for the sky," she said. So I gave her another piece of paper and all the markers.

When she finished, she told me she liked the picture with all the colors the best. I explained that our neighborhood also looks better because many kinds of people live there. We decided the world would be pretty boring if everything was the same!♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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