

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2008

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

KID BITS



ABC and me

Help your little one learn the alphabet by having her use her body to make letters. *Examples:* Curve into a C; arms out straight for a T. Take a picture of each pose, and put them in ABC order in a photo album or computer slide show.

Give 'em a break

As school and other fall activities get under way, declare a weekly "Kids' Night Off." You might pull out toys your children have forgotten about or encourage them to lie in the grass to watch clouds or blow bubbles. Relaxing evenings will help them recharge for busy days.

Model kindness

Teach your child to be considerate of others. Let him see you compliment a meal your spouse cooked or wave to thank another driver for letting you pass. Then, your youngster will be more apt to have something nice to say to teachers and classmates.

Worth quoting

"Happiness lies in the joy of achievement and the thrill of creative effort."
Franklin D. Roosevelt

Just for fun

Q: What do Alexander the Great and Kermit the Frog have in common?

A: The same middle name!



Reach for the stars

A new school year is the perfect time to teach your little one to set goals. Perhaps he wants to learn to read, count, or play basketball. Use these steps to help him decide what he'd like to achieve and how to go for it.

- 1.** Start by explaining some reasons we go to school (to learn letters and numbers, to play with other kids). Next, ask him what he wants to do in school this year. Finally, write down his goals: "Read a whole book by myself," "Count to 20," or "Make 10 baskets in a row."
- 2.** Give your child paper and crayons to draw a picture reminder of each goal. He could sketch a book, a calendar, or a basketball hoop. Post his drawings on the refrigerator so he can see his targets.
- 3.** Follow through. Take him to the library to pick out books for beginning readers. Practice counting on a calendar



at home. Have him shoot hoops in a child-size hoop at home or at the community center.

- 4.** Recognize achievements. When your youngster reaches a goal, you might congratulate him with a special dinner or let him call his aunt to share the news of his success.

Tip: Remind him that learning never ends. After his goals are met, it's time to set new ones. ♥

Be involved

When can you start getting involved in your child's education? Right away! Here are ideas for participating at home or in school:

- ✓ Visit the classroom. Get to know your youngster's teacher and see her classmates.
 - ✓ Offer to read or play learning games with children.
 - ✓ Read school newsletters and browse the school Web site.
 - ✓ Attend back-to-school night, end-of-unit celebrations, and book fairs.
 - ✓ Volunteer to get supplies for a class party.
 - ✓ Tuck a note in your child's backpack or lunch.
- Example:* "I can't wait to see your art project. Love, Mom." ♥



I like me!

Children who feel good about themselves make friends more easily. They're also able to brush off disappointments and solve everyday problems with confidence. Try these suggestions for sending your youngster off to school with a healthy dose of self-esteem.

Spend time together

Show your child that you enjoy talking and spending time with her. "Let's chat while I cook. I'm excited to hear about ballet class." Invite her to go to the coffee shop on Saturday morning—she could sip hot chocolate while you talk about weekend plans.



Showcase success

Frame your youngster's awards and photos. Set them on end tables and bookcases, or hang them on a wall. When she sees her field day certificate or Tae Kwon Do ribbons on display, she'll feel proud of herself.

Discipline with love

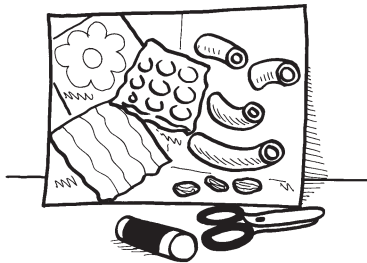
Harsh words and frequent punishments can hurt a child's confidence. Help her correct

her own mistakes: "Running in the doctor's office bothers other patients. Let's find something to do while we wait." She might draw a picture or make up a story to tell you.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Learning collage

Is your youngster in the middle of "Yellow Week" at school? Or is his class learning about opposites? Ask him what he's working on, and then continue the learning at home by helping him make a collage.



Have your child search the house for things that go along with what he's studying. For yellow, he could tape uncooked macaroni, a highlighter, and a sticky note to a piece of construction paper.

For an opposites collage, help him find pictures of things that are opposites (sun, moon; boy, girl; short, tall). Suggest that he glue them onto a poster board, and have him describe his collage to you.♥

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

Playground reading and rhyming

Q: My children spend a lot of time outside. What are some outdoor activities that will help them do well in school?

A: Head to the playground to practice reading and rhyming skills:

- Cut out paper football shapes. Make up a few sentences, and write each word on a separate football. *Examples:* "I," "like," "swimming," "and," "camping." Crumple and throw them in the grass. Your youngsters can run to gather them up, read the words, and unscramble the sentence.

- Use permanent marker to write several words on a beach ball. Choose words that rhyme with many others, such as "fall" and "met." Stand in a circle and toss the ball back and forth. When you catch it, say a word that rhymes with the first word you see.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Neighborhood tour

My son came home excited about his class visit to the post office. I decided to take Noah to other places in our neighborhood so he could learn about where we live.

For our first trip, we read Richard Scarry's *Cars and Trucks from A to Z*. Then, we stopped at the construction site where new houses are going up in our neighborhood. We watched the trucks dig, load, and dump dirt.



Another time, we visited the supermarket. The manager took us into the stockroom to see the crates of fruits and vegetables. Noah watched them unload the produce, and he picked out an apple to take home.

Now, once a month, we choose a time and a place, and Noah helps me write it in my planner. We've visited the pet store, repair shop, and bakery. I think we've both discovered a lot about our town.♥