

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2008

UMES Child & Family Development Center

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KID BITS



Pick-up trick

Cleaning a messy room can be overwhelming for a young child. Make it more manageable by helping out. For example, say, "I'll put the puzzles away while you put the blocks where they belong." Or choose a toy and say, "I wonder where this goes."

Rhyming fun

Learning to rhyme is an important step toward learning to read. The next time you read nursery rhymes to your child, stop at the rhyming word, and let her say it: "Hickory dickory dock, the mouse ran up the _____ (clock)." Have her practice rhyming by making up silly endings, too (sock, wok).

The best policy

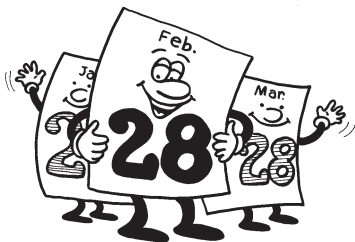
You can encourage your little one to be honest by praising him when he tells the truth. *Example:* "Thank you for admitting that you broke the vase." Learning to be honest helps children develop trust—an important foundation of relationships.

Worth quoting

"Always kiss your children good-night—even if they're already asleep."

H. Jackson Brown Jr.

Just for fun



Q: What month has 28 days?

A: All of them!

Be involved

Teachers, principals, and researchers agree: When parents are involved in learning, children are more likely to succeed in school. Here are some ways you can make a difference.

Support the classroom

Ask your child's teacher how you can help. Be specific about when you're available so she can make the most of your time ("I could come for an hour Tuesday or Thursday morning"). Tell her about your special talents or hobbies. If you enjoy photography, perhaps you could take pictures of classroom events. If you like to cook, volunteer to make applesauce or another healthy snack with the class.

Support the school

Consider volunteering in the school office, cafeteria, health room, or library. You can help youngsters choose library books or offer to update displays. For example, the librarian might want you to remove winter books from the tabletop and replace them with stories about spring. Or you could monitor the lunchroom or answer phones in the office.

Support learning

The simplest way to be involved in your youngster's education is to talk about what he's doing in school. Look over the papers that come home, and ask questions: "I see



you're learning about George Washington. What did he do for our country?" Talking to your child about school every day will show him that you believe education is important.♥

Math minute

How can you improve your child's number skills? Try these quick activities and find out:

★ Have your youngster roll two dice and count the dots. Introduce addition by asking her to choose a number to try for (say, 6). Let her toss the dice several times to find combinations that will make 6 ($1 + 5$, $2 + 4$, $3 + 3$).

★ Make a number line for your child by writing 1 through 10 across a strip of paper. Practice "more than" and "less than" by thinking of a number and giving hints. "My number is more than 4 but less than 8." She can use the number line to solve the mystery—and then choose a number for you to guess.♥



Start collecting!

Does your child fill his pockets with stones and acorns? Is his toy box packed with race cars or plastic frogs? He may not know it, but he's a collector!

Collections can teach your youngster a lot. Here's how to help him get started and learn from whatever he's interested in:

1. Practice classifying by having your child organize his collection. Does he have a basket of action figures in his closet? Suggest that he arrange them on a shelf in several groups: pirates, astronauts, and superheroes.



2. Strengthen language skills by talking about your youngster's items. If he collects postcards, you can read them together and discuss the pictures. *Example:* "Grandma lives near a beautiful beach. Look at the palm trees and bright blue water."

3. Inspire imagination and encourage your child to learn more about his collection by reading a book on the topic. If he has a lot of fire trucks, he might enjoy Leslie McGuire's *Big Frank's Fire Truck*. You may find him using his trucks to fight pretend fires. ♥

Q & A Just the two of you

Q: My older daughter recently realized that her little sister is home alone with me every day. Now Megan complains about going to school, and she takes toys from Erica. What can I do?

A: It is normal for Megan to envy her sister's time with you. She's probably acting out to get your attention, and she's taking her jealousy out on her little sister.



Try spending time alone with Megan doing "big girl" activities. If Erica takes a nap, plan something special, like a craft project, with Megan. If possible, have your toddler stay with a neighbor or relative while you and Megan visit the playground or go skating.

Your attention will make your older daughter feel important. Plus, she'll be happier about going to school knowing that she has special time with you. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5567



PARENT TO PARENT

Keep trying

My son David wanted to learn to tie his shoes. Since he often gets frustrated if he can't do something new quickly, I came up with a plan to help him stick with it.

We decided to start on Saturday when we're not rushed and busy. I told David we would do one step at a time. We began with the first knot, which he mastered quickly. Then, we worked on making the loop. When he got frustrated after a few tries, we took a break to kick a soccer ball around.

That afternoon, David figured out the loop. Now we're working on the bow. With some encouragement, it won't be long before he's tying his shoes on his own. He will have learned a new skill—and the value of perseverance. ♥



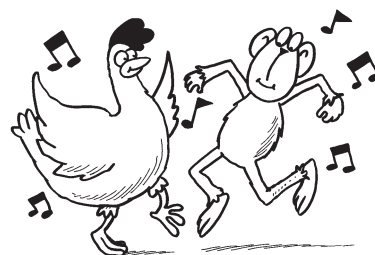
ACTIVITY CORNER

Family workouts

American Heart Month by helping your child get in the habit of heart-healthy exercise. Here are three fun workout ideas for the whole family.

Dance. Put on some music and dance.

The Hokey Pokey and the Macarena are favorites that will get your youngster moving her whole body. Ask your child to make up her own dance, and then follow along.



Race. Have an exercise race. Whoever does 20 jumping jacks or toe touches the fastest wins. Or set a timer for one minute, and see who can do the most sit-ups or push-ups.

Play. Pretend to be animals. Sway like an elephant with your hands clasped together for a trunk, cluck and waddle like a chicken, or hop like a kangaroo. Remember that sillier is better—laughter will increase everyone's heart rate, too! ♥