

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

November 2007

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

## KID BITS



### Then and now

Introduce your little one to history by reading books about early American settlers, such as *Sarah Morton's Day* by Kate Waters. Then, discuss what she has learned. How were their lives different? (Didn't have cars, made their own clothes.) How were they the same? (Lived in houses, played games.)

### Snack right

Make snack time a healthy time for your child by serving kid-friendly fruits and vegetables. Arrange colorful veggies (bell pepper slices, cherry tomatoes, baby carrots) around a plate, and put fat-free ranch dressing in the center as a dip. Or thread fruit like melon chunks, grapes, and strawberries onto wooden skewers.

### Laughing together

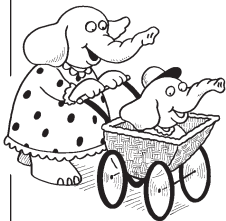
Enjoy a good laugh with your youngster while sharing the Sunday comics. You can use different voices for each character and be as silly as you want. Your child will chuckle at your antics—and learn what a difference it makes to read with expression.

### Worth quoting

"I think a hero is an ordinary individual who finds strength to persevere and endure in spite of overwhelming obstacles."

*Christopher Reeve*

### Just for fun



**Q:** What do elephants have that no other animal has?

**A:** Baby elephants!

## Respect: A two-way street

Do you want your child to show respect toward you and others? One sure way to teach respect is to be considerate toward your youngster. She will learn that it feels good to be respected and will try to follow your example. Here are a few strategies.

### Set standards

When you talk to your youngster, use a pleasant voice and try not to yell. If you're upset, address the situation rather than your child. "Let's clean up your room" is better than "You're a slob." Hearing you speak nicely will encourage everyone in the family to do the same.

### Give privacy

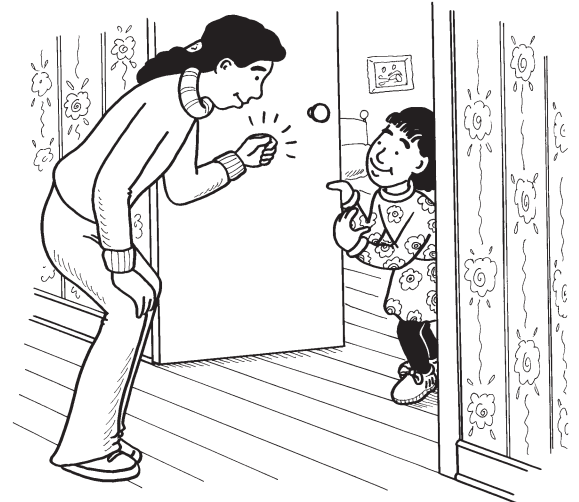
Knock and announce yourself before entering your youngster's room: "It's Mom. I'd like to read you a bedtime story." Knowing you respect her private space teaches your little one to value other people's privacy, too.

### Listen to opinions

Let your child be part of family decision making. Whether it's what color to paint her room or where to go on Saturday, show her that you value her thoughts—even when you can't honor her wishes. *Example:* "We just went to the park. We'll go to the library today and back to the park next week."

### Discipline quietly

If your youngster misbehaves in public, find a



quiet place to discuss what happened. Reprimanding her away from others shows you respect her feelings enough not to embarrass her. ♥

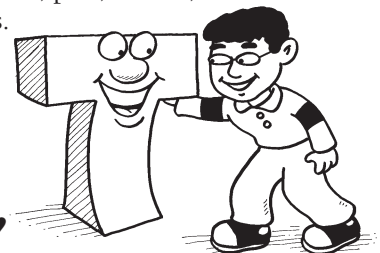
## Word workout

Have five minutes? Play a word game. Thinking of words will help your youngster build his vocabulary and practice letter sounds. Try these.

■ **A-B-C.** Make up a sentence, such as "I went to the zoo and saw an anteater." Your child must repeat your sentence and add a word that begins with "b" ("I went to the zoo and saw an anteater and a bench"). Try to go all the way through the alphabet.

■ **Silly names.** Have your child pick a consonant, and take turns using it as the first letter of friends' names. For example, if your youngster picks T, Jason becomes Tason, and Dana becomes Tana. He can also rename family members, pets, friends, and storybook characters.

*Note:* These are great activities for passing time in the car or while waiting for big sister's dance class to end. ♥

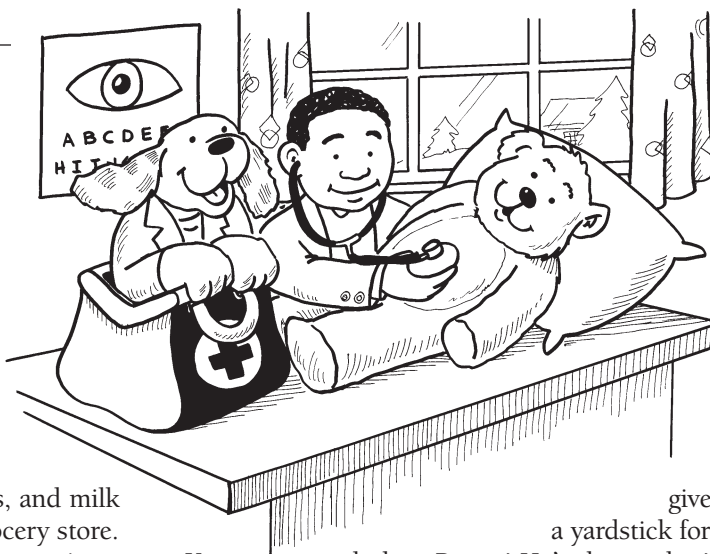


## The world of make-believe

Pretend play is a great way for your little one to learn about the world around him. Give him empty food cartons, and he'll become a grocer. Put out stamps and envelopes, and he'll open a post office.

Use these ideas to turn play-time into learning time:

- Save empty cereal boxes, rice bags, and milk cartons for your child to set up a grocery store. Together, make play money from construction paper. Your youngster can help you find items—and practice math by making change when you “pay.”



- A toy stethoscope, bandages, and a white shirt worn backward can turn your child into a doctor. With stuffed animals as patients, he'll practice language skills and learn about caring for others.

- Tape large sheets of paper to the wall, and give your youngster markers, a yardstick for a pointer, and grown-up clothes. Presto! He's the teacher! Attend his class so he can teach you about letters and counting—while you hear about his school day without even asking.♥



## Q & A Finding a babysitter

**Q:** How can I find a reliable babysitter so my husband and I can have an occasional evening out?

**A:** Finding a dependable babysitter is very important. Start by asking parents at your child's school for sitters they use. If you attend religious services, check with the youth group advisors.

Once you have names of potential sitters, call them to find out more (“Why do you like to babysit?” “When are you available?”). Ask for references, and follow up to find out if the sitter is reliable, trustworthy, and enjoys playing with children.

Finally, have the sitter come over while you're home. Watch how she interacts with your youngster, and go over your rules and expectations (no friends over, read books aloud). *Note:* Be sure to decide on a fee so there are no surprises later.♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

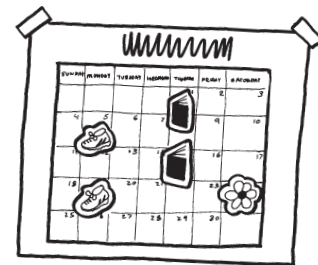
### Remember this!

Does your youngster forget her sneakers on gym day or seem surprised that she has a dentist appointment? She'll have fun keeping track of her schedule if she makes her very own reminder calendar.

**Materials:** ruler, marker, poster board, stickers

With a ruler and marker, help your child make eight lines down and seven lines across a piece of poster board. She can write the days of the week (or the first letters) in the top box of each column and number the squares for the days of the month. *Tip:* If she needs help, lightly pencil in the numbers for her to trace.

Finally, have your youngster put stickers or draw pictures on dates to remember, such as a book for library days. Watch to see how grown-up she feels when she checks her calendar and gets ready “all by herself.”♥



## PARENT TO PARENT Conference time

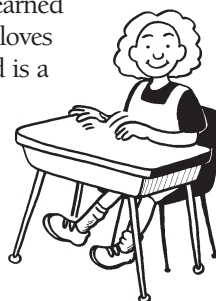
It was fall conference time. I had lots of questions, so I made a list to take with me: “How does Sarah get along with the other kids?” “Does she like school?” “What does she need help with?”

At the conference, I learned that Sarah shares nicely, loves science experiments, and is a leader at recess. I asked Mrs. Morgan if there was anything she needed to work on, and she said Sarah has a little trouble sitting still. Then, she

offered several ideas that I jotted down and decided to try at home.

I started giving Sarah plenty of opportunities to run around outside and move around inside. I also came up with a signal (“Quiet time!”) to let her know when I needed her to sit still for dinner or a story.

A few weeks later, Mrs. Morgan called to let me know that my daughter was doing better sitting quietly in school. I'm happy to know that the teacher is working with us to help Sarah have a successful year.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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