

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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UMES Child & Family Development Center  
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## KID BITS



### Emergency!

Does your child know what to do in an emergency? Have her practice dialing 911 on a toy phone. Role-play what to say: "There's a fire at...!" Taking turns reciting your address and phone number will help her memorize the information. *Tip:* Post important numbers by each phone.

### Table patterns

Work on math skills as your youngster sets the table for dinner. Show him how the silverware makes a pattern: napkin, fork, spoon, napkin, fork, spoon. He can add plates and name the new order. Figuring out patterns teaches children to think logically and predict what will come next.

### Problem solving

Help your child learn how to solve problems. For example, she wants to wear her favorite shirt, but it's dirty. Ask her questions to guide her along. "What's your second-favorite shirt?" "How can we fix this problem?" (do a load of laundry together). Next time, she'll come up with a solution herself!

### Worth quoting

"Always give without remembering, and always receive without forgetting."  
*Brian Tracy*

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do porcupines play leapfrog?

**A:** Very carefully!



## Family learning time

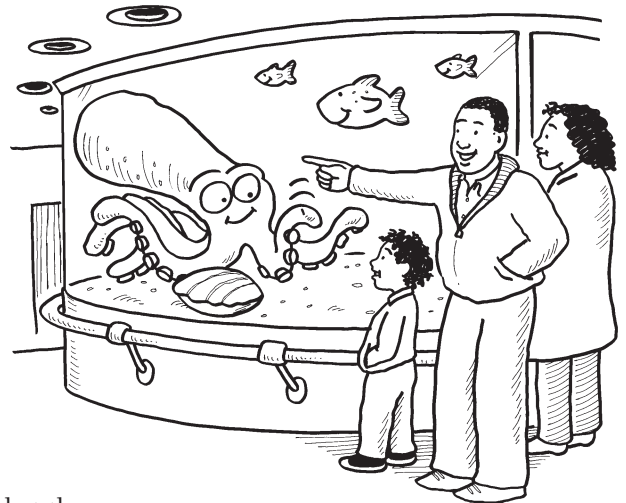
Let your youngster know that learning doesn't stop when he leaves school. Try these ideas for fun activities that will build your child's skills while your family enjoys time together.

### Field trips

Ask your child's teacher what the class is studying, and then plan family field trips that relate. For example, if your youngster is learning about the ocean, you can visit an aquarium. Notice what catches his interest, and continue the discussion at home. *Example:* "You seemed fascinated by the giant squid. Let's find out more online."

### Card games

Organize a family card night. Playing cards teaches kids number sense, counting, and memory, as well as how to follow the rules and be a good sport. Let everyone take turns choosing the game, being the dealer and scorekeeper, and



picking a healthy snack to enjoy while you play. *Idea:* You can play games like Go Fish and Crazy Eights using a regular deck of cards.

### Show time

Look for high school plays and community theater performances. Watching shows will help your child learn new words and become familiar with stories, settings, plots, and characters. Also, his imagination will be stimulated—just watch as he gets home and decides to put on his own production! *Tip:* Check the local newspaper or call nearby schools to find events. ♥

## Displaying work

Show your little one how important her schoolwork is by displaying it in her very own gallery.

Pick a spot (upstairs hallway, kitchen wall) where you have room to hang your child's masterpieces. Make them stand out by gluing or stapling them to colored construction paper. Your youngster will be proud to see her work displayed—and to hear visitors' comments.

You can boost your child's self-esteem even more by hanging her pictures, stories, and math papers at your workplace. If possible, take her to your office on a weekend, or take a picture of the display so she can see how much you value her efforts. ♥

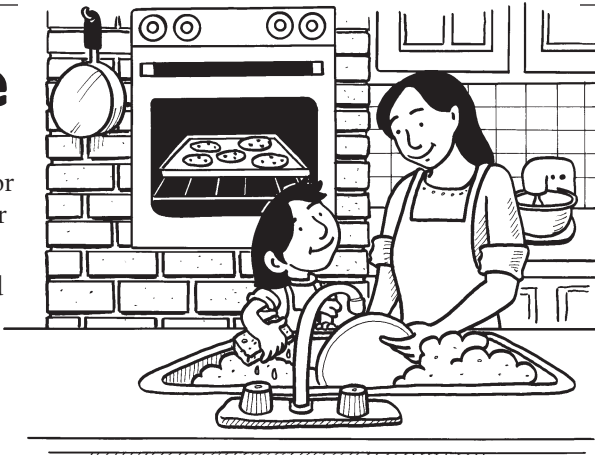


## Patience, patience

Young children often want your attention right now! But having patience is important for success in school and with friends. Teach your child how to be patient with these strategies.

★ **Be specific.** How many times have you told your youngster “just a minute” when she wants something? Instead, try, “When I finish sweeping, we’ll play,” or, “I’ll watch you dance when the big hand is on the three.” Knowing she will have your attention later will encourage her to wait now.

★ **Model patience.** Make cookies together, and brainstorm activities (clean up the kitchen, write a dinner menu) to do



until they’re ready. When you’re stuck in traffic, try playing a word game or singing songs with your youngster. Learning that she can fill her time while waiting will help your child develop self-control.

★ **Praise effort.** Be sure to notice when your child does show

patience. Say, “Thank you for waiting nicely while I finished.” Your praise is apt to encourage her to try harder the next time she has to wait. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT Taming the gimmes

Whenever we used to go gift shopping, my son would ask for something, too. I wanted Ian to learn to like giving as much as he liked receiving. With a bit of planning, I’ve been able to turn gift buying into time we both enjoy.

First, I make it clear that this is a trip for others. Together, we make a list of gift ideas and talk about where to go. One time,

Ian wanted to get gloves for his aunt and stickers for his brother. When we were buying the stickers, he asked to get some for himself. I reminded him that this shopping trip was for his relatives and said no.

Now, when we get home from shopping, Ian wraps the presents himself. The best part is that he’s proud and excited to give gifts that he has helped pick out! ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER Build observation skills

Encourage your child’s natural curiosity and strengthen his observation skills with these two games.

### What’s missing?

Place five small items on a tray. Have your little one stare at them for 30 seconds and then look away. Remove one item and ask him what’s missing. Make the game harder by putting out more items and varying the number that you take away. Or add an item instead of removing one. Turn the tables by having your child prepare the tray for you.



### Color hunt

Here’s a game that you can play inside or outside. Call out two colors and tell your youngster to look for two things in each color. At first, make it easy, such as white for snow or blue like your sofa. As his observation skills improve, pick colors that are harder to find (navy blue, pale yellow). ♥

## Q & A Beginning, middle, end

**Q:** When my daughter tells stories, she seems to get all mixed up. How can I help her learn to talk about things in order?

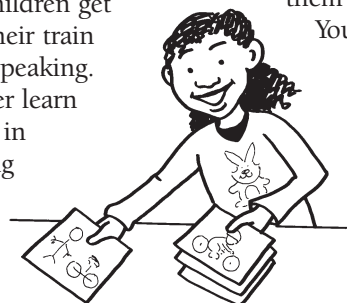
**A:** Many young children get excited and lose their train of thought when speaking. Help your daughter learn how to tell stories in sequence by having her draw them.

Divide a piece of paper into four equal sections.

Ask your child to draw what happened first in one block, what happened next in another, and so on. Then, have her carefully cut out the pictures and put them in order as she tells her story.

You can prompt her by asking, “What happened in the beginning?” “Then what happened?” “How did it end?”

Your daughter will get practice telling stories in the correct order—plus she’ll have drawings to go along with her stories! ♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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