

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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UMES Child & Family Development Center
Donna Long, Ed.D., Director

KID BITS



Step by step

Help your child learn to follow directions by giving her one step at a time. Instead of, "Brush your teeth, and pick out a bedtime story," say, "Brush your teeth." When her teeth are brushed, ask her to get a book. Once she has mastered one-step directions, try two things at once.

Family changes

If you're going through a separation or a divorce, make sure your youngster feels safe and loved. Go over his schedule each day so he'll know who's picking him up from school and where he's spending the night. Plan special activities together (baking cookies, raking leaves).

Share information

Conference time is the perfect opportunity to share your child's talents with the teacher. "Maggie loves singing and acting. She's always putting on plays at home." Knowing her interests and strengths will help the teacher find activities your youngster will enjoy in school.

Worth quoting

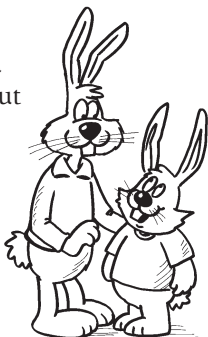
"Never be afraid to sit awhile and think."

Lorraine Hansberry

Just for fun

Q: How can you say rabbit without the letter R?

A: Bunny!



Which learning style?

Children learn in many ways—they watch, listen, and touch. Take advantage of your youngster's favorite way of learning, and you can help him shine in reading and math.

Learning style: Visual

Children learn by seeing and observing.

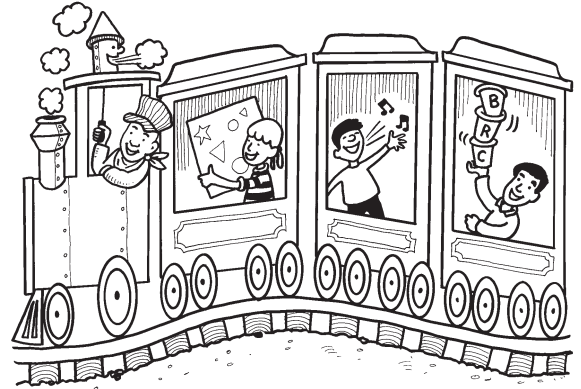
Reading: After reading a story, give your youngster the book. Build his reading comprehension by having him use the pictures to retell the plot in his own words.

Math: Ask your child to draw patterns and "read" them. He might alternate red and orange rectangles for bricks on a house and then say, "red, orange, red, orange."

Learning style: Auditory

Children learn by listening.

Reading: Read a poem aloud. Help your child practice rhyming by substituting new words ("the kite flew high" becomes "the kite flew by").



Math: Practice counting with number songs—try "Knick-Knack Paddy Whack" or "Five Little Ducks."

Learning style: Hands-on

Children learn by touching and moving.

Reading: Get three cups and write a letter on each. Collect small objects beginning with those letters (bead and ball for B; ring and raisin for R). Have your youngster sort the items into the correct cups to practice letter sounds.

Math: Write the numbers 1–9 on pieces of paper. Tape them in a circle on the floor. Play music as your child walks on them. When the music stops, he claps to show what number he's on (5 claps on 5).♥

Say "no" to bullying

It's never too early to teach your child about bullying. Start by explaining what bullying is: "If someone calls you names, teases you, hits you, or pushes you, that's bullying." Then, give your youngster ways to feel more confident if a bully bothers her.

- Teach her specific words to use. Role-play looking the bully in the eye and saying, "Don't make fun of me. Stop it." Then, let your child practice walking away.
- Reassure your child that she's not tattling if she tells a teacher or parent. If someone is hurting her or threatening her, she should find an adult right away. ♥



Operation cooperation

When everyone pitches in, life is easier—and more fun! Help your youngster learn to cooperate so she'll get along well with family members, teachers, and other children.

▲ Show her what cooperation looks like. Read *The Little Red Hen* (Paul Galdone) and *The Enormous Turnip* (Alexei Tolstoy). Ask her which characters are more cooperative. (The hen bakes bread alone since her friends won't help, but all the animals in Tolstoy's book pitch in to pull up the turnip.)



▲ Compare your child's family or class to a sports team—everyone must cooperate to get things done. For instance, "You pick up your toys, and I'll vacuum the playroom." Have her think of examples of cooperation at school (return library books for others to read, clear away lunch trays so the next class can eat).

▲ Play cooperation games. Sit back-to-back and try to stand up—you and your youngster must work together to get up. Or have a three-legged race. Two players try to walk with one leg tied to the other's (use a scarf or a pillowcase).♥



Q & A No more naps?

Q: My daughter doesn't like to nap anymore, but she still gets tired and cranky in the late afternoon. How can I get her to rest?

A: Your youngster is probably ready to give up her afternoon nap. But staying awake all day may take some getting used to.

As she adjusts, schedule afternoon downtime.



Encourage her to pack a "quiet bag" with books, paper and crayons, and a few dolls or stuffed animals. Help her find a spot to play quietly, such as on her bed or in a cozy corner with a pillow and a blanket.

If possible, let her see you and her siblings doing something quiet, too (paying bills, homework). She'll be more likely to rest if the house is not busy. And the downtime will help everyone enjoy the evening!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Supermarket math

My son's class is learning about measurements. On a recent trip to the grocery store, Colin pointed out the produce scale. He was thrilled when I asked if he'd like to weigh our fruits and vegetables.

Colin told me they only look at the "big numbers" (not the fractions of pounds) at school. He weighed the apples and announced, "They weigh more than 3 pounds but less than 4 pounds." I also asked him questions like, "What weighs more—an orange or a banana?" He held one in each hand to see which felt heavier. Then, he weighed them to check his prediction.

Now every time we go food shopping, Colin picks something different to weigh. It takes a little longer to shop, but he's having a good time—and he's practicing math, too.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Dig up some fun

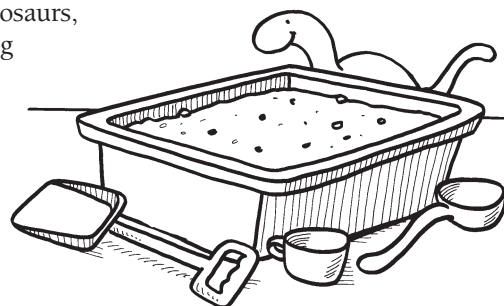
Set up an at-home dinosaur dig to strengthen your child's hand muscles and improve his hand-eye coordination for writing and other skills.

Fill a cardboard box or plastic container with dry rice or beans.

Bury plastic dinosaurs, bone-shaped dog biscuits, and rocks in the bottom. Then, let your youngster pretend to be a scientist

searching for dinosaur fossils. Give him tools to use. He can scoop with cups, shovels, and soup ladles. Let him use tongs to pick up his finds. *Tip:* Tell him how many objects you put in, and let him count until he gets them all.

For another challenge, hide puzzle pieces in the rice or beans. When your little one uncovers all of them, he can put the puzzle together.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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