

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2019



## KID BITS

### True or false?

Little ones are still learning the difference between real and make-believe, so they may fib without thinking things through. To help your child consider true vs. false, write a large T (true) and F (false) on paper. Take turns saying a sentence. If it's true ("I have 10 fingers"), the other person slaps the T. If it's false ("I have a pet dragon"), he slaps the F.

### A look back

Introduce your youngster 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 settlers' lives different? (They didn't have cars and made their own clothes.) How were they the same? (They lived in houses and played games.)

### Earth Day

Show your child that he can do his part to help the planet on April 22—and every day. Help him turn an empty wipes container into a portable trash can. He could decorate it with permanent markers and take it along to the park so he'll have a place to stash his trash instead of littering.

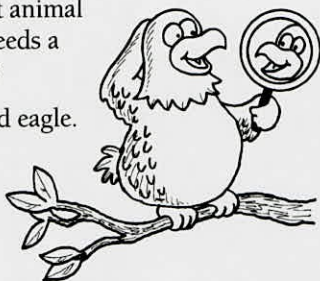
### Worth quoting

"Nothing is so contagious as enthusiasm." *Samuel Taylor Coleridge*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What animal never needs a haircut?

**A:** A bald eagle.



## Fine motor fun—outside!

Your youngster can build hand strength and coordination with fun outdoor activities. Try these ideas that will help her with tasks like holding a pencil, using a fork, and tying her shoes.

### Shadow tracings

Find a sunny spot on a sidewalk, driveway, or playground blacktop, and have your child use sidewalk chalk to trace around shadows. She could outline the shadow of a tree or ask you to pose while she traces your shadow. Suggest that she add details in the outlines, like leaves and bark on the tree, or a face, hair, and clothing on your shadow.

### Plastic cap fishing

Build hand-eye coordination with this fishing game. First, collect and rinse plastic caps and lids from bottles and jars. Then, take them outside with a bucket of water and some kitchen utensils. Let your youngster float the caps in the water and



fish them out. She might scoop them with a spoon, pinch them with tongs, or use a strainer as a net.

### Spray art

Fill several spray bottles with water. Help your child add a few drops of different colors of washable paint to each bottle and shake them up. Outdoors, she can spray the water onto a fence or wall to make a painting. Squeezing the handles will strengthen hand muscles—and she'll enjoy being creative.♥

## Sincere apologies

"Say you're sorry!" If you're like many parents, you've said those words to your child and maybe not gotten a genuine apology. Consider these suggestions to help him learn to apologize—and mean it.

● **Lead by example.** When you mess up, get down on your youngster's level, look him in the eye, and offer an apology. ("I'm sorry I threw away your snack. I should have asked if you were finished.")

● **Give guidance.** If your child needs to apologize, encourage him to say what he's sorry for and why. ("I'm sorry I left the refrigerator door open. I know the food could've gotten warm.") Then, he can tell how he'll do better in the future. ("I'll make a sign to hang on the fridge so I'll remember next time.")♥





## Can I help?

Need an extra pair of helping hands? Look no further than your little one! Here are ways you can build on his eagerness to help out and teach him skills for the future.

**Say yes.** When your youngster asks to help you, let him, even if you think the job is too hard for him. Just look for a small part he can tackle. Maybe he could shake the pillows out of the pillowcases when you're changing the sheets, for example.



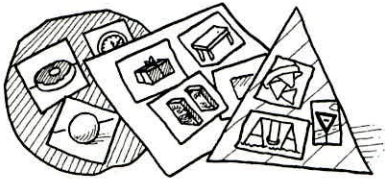
**Be patient.** Allow your child to work at his own pace. Sure, it might take a little longer for him to load all the bowls into the dishwasher. But the sense of accomplishment he'll feel is worth a few extra minutes.

**Offer a hand.** If you notice your youngster struggling, ask if he needs help rather than taking over. But be prepared to let him work things out on his own if he turns you down.

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Shapes galore

Circles, squares, triangles, rectangles...shapes are everywhere! Encourage your child to explore them with these activities:



- Let your youngster feel shapes to learn their attributes, like number of sides and corners. Together, bend and tape straws into different shapes, and put them in a paper bag. Take turns reaching in and feeling a shape without looking. Now describe it, and say what you think it is. ("This shape has three straight sides and three corners. It's a triangle.")

- Have your child find pictures with real-life shapes. First, help her cut construction paper into large shapes. Now let her flip through old magazines, search for pictures with each shape, and cut out and glue them on the matching paper. *Examples:* clock (circle), cheese (triangle), blanket (rectangle).♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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**Praise effort.** Thank your child for his help, and point out how he made a difference. ("We got the towels folded a lot faster, thanks to your hard work!") You'll make him feel proud and motivate him to keep helping.♥

## Q & A

### What to do about whining

**Q:** My son whines when he doesn't get his way. What do you suggest?

**A:** Whining is common at this age, and it can easily become a habit. First, explain that whining is unpleasant to listen to, and make sure your son realizes what it sounds like. You could demonstrate by saying the same thing in a whiny voice and again in a regular voice.

Then, tell him you'll respond to requests when he uses a pleasant voice. If he whines, offer him a do-over. You might say, "Please try that again in your normal voice."

Finally, be consistent. Your child probably won't stop whining overnight, but as he realizes that it won't get him what he wants, he'll gradually break the habit.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Family storytelling

At our daughter Zoe's school literacy night, the reading teacher said telling family stories improves kids' speaking and listening skills. She explained that anyone can be a storyteller, and she gave us a few pointers.

We decided to try storytelling with Zoe, using the strategies we learned. Since the teacher said kids love to hear about when they were "little," we started with a story about the day

Zoe was born. My husband and I took turns adding to it, and Zoe piped up with details she'd heard over the years: "And I had a full head of hair!"

Other times, we use family photos as a prompt. The other day, Zoe led us in a story about building a bird feeder and watching the birds with her grandma.

I know storytelling will help Zoe with communication skills in school. But the thing I like best is the time we spend sharing family history and bonding.♥

