

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2020



## KID BITS

### Where on the map?

Encourage your youngster to explore geography with this idea. Go for a walk, then let her create a 3-D “map” of your neighborhood using toys and craft supplies. She might lay down strips of tape for streets and add tissue box houses and aluminum foil ponds and streams.

### Tell the truth

If you suspect your child is being dishonest, try giving him a chance to correct himself. Say he claims he washed his hands but you didn't hear the water running. You could say, “Why don't you go back and make sure they're clean? Then you can show me what a good job you did.”

### Share your job

Does your youngster know what you do at work? Take on-the-job selfies to show her! You could also share your work by bringing home a flyer you designed or paint samples from your store's hardware department. *Note:* If possible, arrange to take her to work with you for Take Our Daughters and Sons to Work Day (April 23).

### Worth quoting

“Smile, and others will smile back.”  
*Jean Baudrillard*

### Just for fun

**Q:** When is a sheepdog most likely to go into a house?

**A:** When the door is open.



## Caring for our planet

On April 22, the world celebrates Earth Day. But every day is a good day for your little one to help take care of the planet! Consider these tips for teaching your youngster responsibility with the “three Rs”: reduce, reuse, and recycle.

### Reduce

Invite your child to join you in the kitchen, and let him help you think of ways to cut down on waste. You might suggest drying hands with a dish towel rather than a paper towel. And he could use fabric paint to decorate cloth bags for grocery shopping so you won't need plastic or paper bags.

### Reuse

Before you throw away that cream cheese tub, brainstorm with your youngster new ways to use it. It might become a flower planter or a home for stray Legos. An empty pickle jar could hold his markers or colored pencils. Soon, he'll see possibilities in everything—and think twice before throwing something out!



### Recycle

Help your little one learn local recycling rules. Visit a recycling center together, or call to ask what they accept. You may even be able to take a tour so your child sees what happens to the things you recycle. Then, have him make a poster to remind family members what to toss in the bin. Ask him to draw and label items that are allowed and tape his sign to your recycling bin. ♥

## Play with shapes

“There are squares on the tablecloth.” “That drum is a cylinder.” Your child can practice recognizing flat and solid (3-D) shapes with these suggestions.

- **Make pictures.** Help your youngster draw and cut out triangles, circles, and squares from construction paper. Then, she could glue them on paper to make pictures. Let her tell you about her artwork. (“This tent is a triangle. The windows are squares.”)
- **Create a display.** How many cubes can your child find around the house? Pick objects that are solid geometric shapes, such as a die (cube), drinking glass (cylinder), or soccer ball (sphere). Encourage her to gather more items with the same shape and display and label them. ♥



# Learn from nonfiction

Nonfiction picture books let your little one discover her world in ways she'll understand. Try these ideas for helping her learn from nonfiction.

**Combine books with play.** Read a library book about skyscrapers or famous landmarks, then place it near your child's block bin. Look for books about animals she knows from



her stuffed versions, such as sloths or penguins. She will make connections between her play and the books. Maybe she'll build the Eiffel Tower out of blocks or make her penguin waddle like real penguins do.

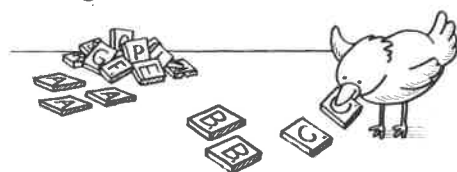
**Compare fact with fiction.** Get a nonfiction book and a related fiction book. For example, read a fact book about hot-air balloons and a story about a trip in a hot-air balloon. Talk about how the books are similar and different. What story events and details are realistic based on facts your youngster learned in the nonfiction book? She might say that a hot-air balloon does have a basket for people to ride in—but that you can't travel around the world in a day like the family in the book did.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Looking ahead to kindergarten

I recently had a spring conference with my son's preschool teacher. Since Caleb doesn't know all of his letters and numbers yet, I asked Mrs. Ryan if he was ready for kindergarten. Her answer: "Absolutely!"

The teacher explained that while the class has been learning ABCs and 123s, students spend more time on getting along with others, listening and following directions, and expressing feelings. Starting kindergarten with those skills will allow Caleb to focus on things like reading and math.



She also gave us suggestions for working on letters and numbers at home. Following her advice, I got out Scrabble tiles for Caleb to play with. Now he enjoys sorting them by letter and finding the letters in his name. He also likes it when I ask him to count things. When we take walks, for example, I'll ask him to count how many dogs or motorcycles he sees.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### My mud kitchen

Playing in the mud lets your child explore science and math while using his imagination. Head outdoors together, and try these activities.

**Materials:** beach bucket or old mixing bowl, wooden spoon, measuring cups and spoons, baking sheet, spatula



Encourage your child to mix soil and water. What happens? He made mud! Let him experiment with different amounts of soil and water. He could use measuring cups and tweak his "recipe" until he finds the consistency he likes.

Now it's time for your little chef to "cook." He might put mud on a baking sheet and mold it into cookies or pretzels, then flip them with a spatula. Or maybe he'll make mud soup. Have him search for creative "ingredients" to stir into mud, like rocks for potatoes, twigs for carrots, and leaves for spinach. *Idea:* Add writing practice by helping him write recipes for his creations.♥

## Q & A Time-out alternatives

**Q:** Time-outs don't seem to make a difference in my daughter's behavior. What else can I do when she acts out?

**A:** While a time-out might stop misbehavior in the moment, it may not teach your child how to behave better in the future.

The next time your daughter acts out, explain what she did wrong and remove her

from the situation. Say she repeatedly tries to cut in line at the slide. You could say, "You need to wait your turn." Then, have her find somewhere else to play, such as on the swings or monkey bars.

Let your child know you notice what she does well, too. ("You remembered to use your words.") Pointing out what she does right will motivate her to repeat the behavior.♥



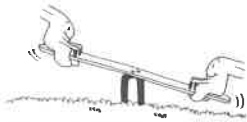
**OUR PURPOSE**

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

Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated  
 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
 800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success



## SHORT NOTES

### Excellent attendance

Being in school every day means your child won't miss out on learning. Try to schedule appointments and family trips outside of school hours. If he asks to stay home "just because," remind him of what he'll miss, such as his reading group or PE class. Explain that he can be absent only if he's sick or if there's a family emergency.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior. Eating dinner together is great, but other meals count, too. If you work at night, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. Or on a weekend, try a picnic lunch.

### Celebrate progress

Suggest that your youngster create a fun reminder of all the things she has accomplished. Let her cover a box with construction paper and label it "I did it!" Then, she can write each success ("I learned to add fractions") on a slip of paper and put it in the box. If she's feeling discouraged, have her read the slips.

### Worth quoting

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up!"  
Mark Twain

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Can a kangaroo jump higher than the Empire State Building?

**A:** Of course. The Empire State Building can't jump!



## Conversations about school

When you think of parent involvement, do you picture moms and dads volunteering in classrooms? That's one way to help—but research shows that supporting your child's education at home is even more important. Here are conversation starters that will help you stay involved.



### "Let's see what you brought home."

Look at completed work to find out what your youngster is learning and how well she's doing. You could comment on her math work or social studies project, for instance. ("You know a lot about our state's history!") Also, respond to notes from her teacher, and sign her weekly folder or daily planner if required.

### "Show me what you have for homework."

It's your child's job to do her homework, but you play a role, too. Make sure she knows what she's supposed to do by having her explain the assignments to you. After she finishes her homework, glance over the work to see that it's complete.

### "Describe a book you enjoyed today."

This gives you an idea of what your youngster prefers to read. Then, build a daily reading habit by asking what she'd like to read tonight. Encourage her reading and listening skills by reading aloud to her and letting her read to you.

### "Tell me what you learned that you'd like to know more about."

Use her interests as jumping-off points for activities to share. If she likes geometry, you might hunt for

shapes together. If she's fascinated by how animals adapt to winter, take her to the library to research the subject or to the zoo to see live animals.♥

## After-school questions

Asking "How was school today?" might not get you far. Instead, ask questions like these for a better picture of your youngster's day:

- "What's the coolest thing that happened today?"
- "Pretend you're the teacher. How would you describe the day?"
- "What made you laugh?"
- "What was the most creative thing you did?"
- "How were you kind or helpful today? How was someone kind or helpful to you?" ♥

