

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Nashoba Community Partnership for Children
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KID BITS

Letter sounds with a “twist”

Tongue twisters are a great trick for helping children speak clearly and learn letter sounds. Give your youngster’s mouth muscles a workout with “She sells seashells by the seashore” or “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers.” Say them together until he memorizes them. Next, take turns trying to say them quickly and clearly.

How to handle disappointment

Oops! Your child wanted to wear her favorite shirt, but it’s dirty. Suggest something she could do to move past the disappointment. “I know you’re upset about the shirt. Why don’t you pick out another cool shirt?” Then, have her make sure the dirty shirt goes in the hamper so it gets washed.

Growing up

Visiting friends, staying with sitters, or spending the night with relatives can make your youngster feel more independent. Visits like these help him adjust to different people and places. And they show him that he can get along okay when he’s away from you.

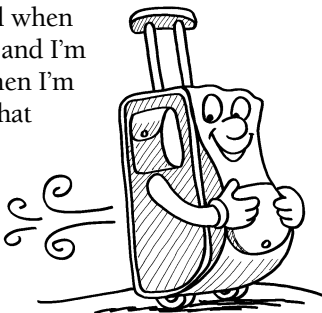
Worth quoting

“Wonder. Go on and wonder.”
William Faulkner

Just for fun

Q: I’m full when I’m away, and I’m empty when I’m home. What am I?

A: A suitcase.



Build responsibility with chores

Encourage your child to be responsible from a young age by giving her regular chores around the house. She will feel good pitching in, and her self-esteem will grow.

Offer reasons

Remember that your youngster’s idea of how to complete a chore may look different from yours. Try not to be upset if she crams her toys under her bed to “clean” her room. Instead, gently let her know that if she puts them away where they belong, it will be easier to find what she wants at playtime.

Show the way

Give your child “on-the-job training” to help her feel successful with new chores. First, show her how to do each step of the task. Say she’s learning to water the houseplants. You might demonstrate how to fill the watering can, sprinkle each plant slowly, and wipe up



drips with a towel. Do the new chore together the first few times until she gets the hang of it. Then, let her fly solo.

Focus on the good

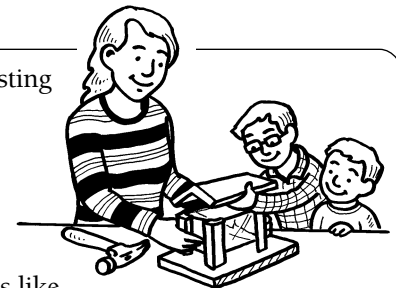
Boost your youngster’s sense of accomplishment and nurture a “can-do” attitude by pointing out the parts she got right before correcting a mistake. Rather than saying, “Oh no, you spilled the salad,” try, “Thanks for helping set out the food for dinner. You put the salad in just the right spot. Now, let’s clean up what spilled.”♥

Playing to learn

Play is more than just fun—it has brain-boosting powers! Here are tips for using play to enrich your youngster’s learning.

Talk while you play. Encourage your little one to pretend he’s a piano teacher, a doctor, or anything else that strikes his fancy. You can be the student or the patient and pose questions like “How should I work on this song?” He’ll practice vocabulary as he answers.

Do a project. Ask your youngster to make something with you. He will work on planning and decision making as you paint a mural, create a puzzle, or build a bird feeder. Let him decide which colors to use, the type of puzzle to make, or what shape the bird feeder should be.♥



Hunt for hearts

A heart-inspired scavenger hunt is a “love-ly” way to give your child practice in writing, reading, and following directions. Follow these steps.

1. Both of you choose a different color of construction paper. Yours might be pink and his red, for example. Help him draw and cut out three hearts from each color of paper.



- 2.** Ask him to write notes on each of your hearts while you write messages on his. (“I love being with you!” “You are my sunshine.”) If he’s not writing yet, he could dictate his words to you.
- 3.** Let him hide his messages in one room, while you hide yours in another. Or hide them all outside.
- 4.** Now go on your hunt!

Give directions as your youngster searches for his hearts. *Examples:* “Take two steps to the left.” “Turn right and look down.” After he finds his, he can give you directions to locate yours.

Idea: Once you have found all the hearts, snuggle up and read your messages aloud to each other.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Shape “matcharoo”

Explore geometry by awakening your youngster to the 3-D shapes all around her. Try these ideas.

Flat or solid?

Start by helping her see the difference between 2-D shapes and 3-D shapes. Have her cut a circle from paper. How is it different from a soup can, which is also circular? She will notice that the circle is flat, while the soup can is solid.



Make a match

Next, play a game. One of you says, “Doodle-do, matcharoo!” and names an object that matches a 3-D shape like a sphere, cube, cone, or pyramid. Then, the other person has to think of another item in that shape. For instance, your child says, “Doodle-do, matcharoo! I have a Ping-Pong ball!” You could match it by saying “orange” because they are both spheres. Take turns coming up with more 3-D items, such as a tissue box and an ottoman for a cube, or a soccer cone and an ice cream cone for a cone.♥



Q & A

Talking about disabilities

Q: One of my daughter’s schoolmates uses a wheelchair, and my child doesn’t seem to know how to act around her. What should I do?

A: Try to help your daughter understand that everyone is different—and also alike. For example, maybe your youngster needs help learning to count. This child needs help getting around, so she uses a wheelchair. Then, ask your daughter what she and the girl might have in common. Perhaps they both like to read books, tell jokes, or watch baseball.

Encourage her to approach the girl at recess, tell something about herself, and then ask a question. “Hi, I’m Flori. I love watching baseball. What do you like to do?” Perhaps they’ll play a game of catch or find something else they can do together.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Little getaways

My wife and I work many hours to pay the bills, and sometimes it seems like we have no downtime for family. So my son Oliver helped us invent Getaway Days.

Once a month, we put a Getaway Day on the calendar for the weekend. We treat it like a mini vacation. The only rule is to “get away” from the house and try something new together. Once

we explored a new library in a neighboring town. Another time we wandered around a local nature preserve.

Our trips are exposing Oliver to interesting things, such as the local history section in the library and the various kinds of plants and birds in our area. But the best part is that we’re connecting and making memories.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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