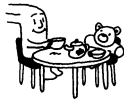


Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2015



Playmates Learning Center

"Helping Children Learn Through Play Since 1988"

KID BITS

Long-distance connections

Encourage your child to stay in touch with relatives who live far away. She might eat breakfast with her aunt and uncle via video chat. Or she could become pen pals with out-of-town cousins and send photos with her letters. She'll get practice speaking, writing, and communicating as she builds bonds with family.

Breaking habits

If your youngster bites his nails or chews his pencil, you may wonder how he can break the habit. Many kids overcome these habits without much difficulty as they get older. In the meantime, suggest activities to distract him. When he bites his nails, for example, suggest singing a song that uses hand movements.

DID YOU KNOW?

The Common Core State Standards begin in kindergarten. Among other things, they call for children to read more nonfiction, to write for a variety of purposes, and to explain their thinking when they solve math problems. Visit corestandards.org to see if your state has adopted these learning standards.

Worth quoting

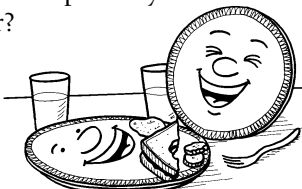
"Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

Albert Camus

Just for fun

Q: What did one plate say to the other?

A: Lunch is on me!



Responsible for myself

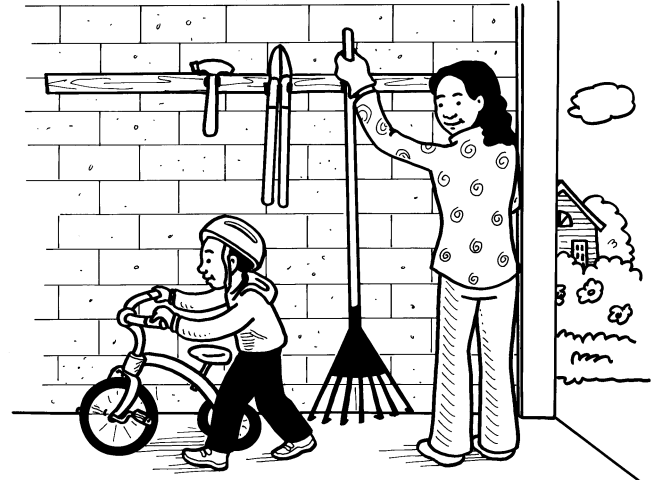
You know you want your little one to grow into a responsible teenager and adult one day. But responsibility isn't built overnight—it's the result of many small steps. Here are some you can take now.

Make decisions

Try to give your child responsibility for choices, whether he's deciding what to pack for a sleepover or which kind of birthday party to have. For example, discuss the weather forecast, and let him pick the clothes to take. Or help him talk through two or three party choices, listing the pros and cons of each.

Be accountable

Have your youngster fix his mistakes when possible. This teaches him to take responsibility for his actions. If he leaves his tricycle outside in the rain and it gets wet, have him dry it off himself. Then, talk about what he should do differently



next time (put the tricycle away when he's finished riding it).

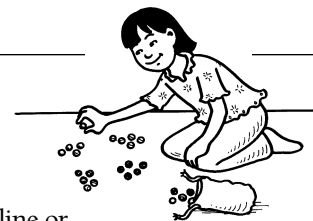
Enjoy results

Let your child be responsible for remembering what he needs to do. If he brings his books back on library day, he can check out new ones. Or if he puts his favorite T-shirt in the laundry hamper, he'll be able to wear it again soon. Seeing the consequences of showing responsibility will encourage him to keep up the good work!♥

Everyday math words

Help your child get comfortable with the language of math by weaving math words and phrases into conversations. Here's how:

- Encourage your youngster to compare quantities and sizes. You could ask, "Are there *more* people in the first line or the second line?" or "Which glass has *less* water?" This prepares her to make "greater than," "less than," and "equal to" comparisons with numbers and measurements.
- Use phrases that your child will find in story problems, like *altogether* and *take away*. ("There are three pictures on this wall. If we *take away* one picture, how many will be left?")
- It's not too early for your little one to begin understanding fractions. Ask her to fold napkins in *half*, or suggest that she divide her marble collection into four *equal sets*.♥



The colors of autumn

From leaves on the trees to apples at the farmer's market, autumn is a wonderfully colorful time of year. These ideas will let your youngster explore colors and take advantage of the season.

Hop, skip, jump. Turn an ordinary stroll into an energetic romp by giving your youngster silly directions for spotting colors. For instance, you could say, "Hop to a purple flower" or "Tiptoe to something orange." She'll practice recognizing colors and following directions.



Compare shades. Fall leaves are ideal for showing your child that colors come in different shades. Together, collect leaves in various colors from the ground in your backyard, on the sidewalk, or at a park. Ask her to sort them into piles by color and name the colors. Then, she could organize the leaves in each pile from lightest to darkest.

Match the veggies. Help your youngster cut small squares of orange, green, red, yellow, and brown paper. Let her take the "swatches" to a farmer's market or grocery store and find a fruit or vegetable matching each one. Suggest that she invent a color name based on what she sees, and help her write it on her swatch. *Example:* "Granny Smith Green."♥

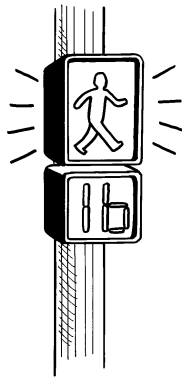
PARENT TO PARENT

Cross the street safely



I thought I had taught my son Joey to look both ways when we crossed the street together. But he would just turn his head back and forth without really looking, so I realized he needed extra practice.

We laid two jump ropes side by side to make a "crosswalk" on the grass. Holding hands, we stood on one side, and I asked, "When you look left, what do you see?" He pointed out a tree that lost a limb last night. Next, I had him tell me what he saw when he looked right and then left again before we crossed. Sometimes we pretended there was a signal at the crosswalk and we needed to wait for it to change before checking both ways.



Now when we cross a real street, we say, "Look left, look right, look left." Between our pretend and real-life practice, I feel confident that Joey will get the hang of it soon.♥

Tell me all about school!

When you ask about your child's day, you show him you're interested in his education. Plus, you lay a foundation for talking about school in the future. Try these steps.



1. Learn about his daily schedule, and use it to start conversations. On music day, you might say, "What songs did you sing today with Mrs. Carson?"
2. Follow his mood. If your youngster is tired or cranky after school, wait until he's rested and talkative. You'll have a more pleasant chat when he's ready to talk.
3. Ask questions that lead to more than one-word answers. Instead of "How was your day?" try "What was your favorite part of today?" Gently prompt your child to add details. "Painting sounds like fun. What did you paint a picture of?"♥

Q & A Learning through play

Q: When I go into my daughter's preschool, it looks like the kids are just playing. How are they learning?

A: Albert Einstein once said, "Play is the highest form of research." This is especially true for young children, who learn a lot during hands-on play.

For example, you may see your child playing house with classmates. The youngsters are also building fine-motor

skills by dressing dolls or pretending to cook, and they're working on cooperation as they decide who will do which tasks. And when they play at the sand and water tables, they might draw letters in sand or explore math by measuring water.



The next time you visit your daughter's preschool, take another look. You'll be surprised at all the "playful" learning opportunities you see!♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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