

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

KID BITS

Something new

You can stimulate your child's curiosity about her world while expanding her vocabulary. Every so often, help her discover something new, like an unusual fruit. Ask her questions, such as what she thinks it tastes like and where it's grown.

You're the star!

Give your youngster—and yourself—a lifetime of priceless memories. On his birthday, tape him playing, singing, and telling a little about his life. Continue each year, using the same tape. You'll have a treasured record of your child growing up.

Handwriting workouts

Did you know that exercising her hand muscles helps your child develop good handwriting? Let her use tweezers to pick up small objects, like dry pasta or beans, and drop them into a cup. Stringing beads or doing puzzles can also strengthen tiny muscles.

Worth quoting

"The first duty of love is to listen."
Paul Tillich

Just for fun



Q: What do you call a bee who can't make up his mind?

A: A maybe.

Better behavior Through loving discipline

As your children get older, it's natural for them to challenge you. Sometimes, it seems easier to just let them have their way. But all kids need limits, and they need parents to guide them.

Discipline works best with a balance of love, respect, clearly defined rules, and understanding. Here are some secrets of effective discipline.

Make the rules clear

It's easier for children to follow the rules when they know what to expect. Talk about family rules, explaining the consequences clearly. *Example:* "Put your bicycle away when you've finished riding it. If you don't, you won't be allowed to ride it the next day." As your youngsters learn to read, write down the rules and put them on the refrigerator as a reminder.

Stay strong

Your kids may "test" the rules from time to time. When they do, try to stand your ground and apply the set consequences. Being firm and consistent lets them know that you mean business.

Give positive feedback

Focus more on the things your children do right than the things they do wrong. This will encourage them to try even harder to behave. So, when you see behavior



you'd like repeated, let your kids know. *Example:* "Thanks for hanging up your coat and backpack!" ♥

"I can do it!"

Children gain confidence by doing things on their own. Show your youngster how to do these tasks by slowly and carefully doing them while she's watching. The more she does for herself, the more she'll be able to do!

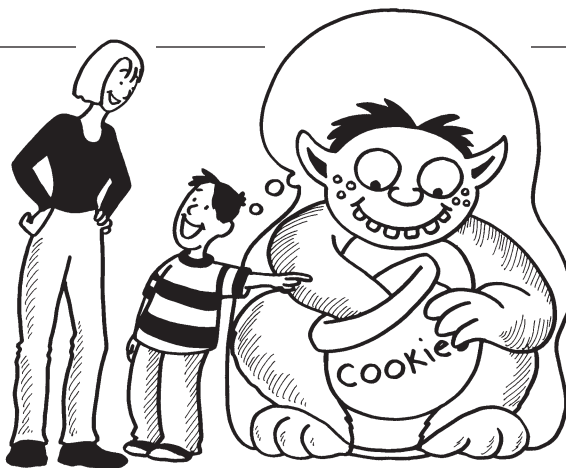
- ▲ Prepare cold cereal.
- ▲ Make a sandwich.
- ▲ Choose her clothes for the next day.
- ▲ Tie her shoes.
- ▲ Answer the phone politely.
- ▲ Set her alarm clock.
- ▲ Write a short thank-you note.
- ▲ Hang up her wet towel in the bathroom. ♥



Q & A Telling the truth

Q: For the third time this week, my son told a lie. They weren't big ones, but how can I get him to stop? Why is he doing this?

A: Young kids have vivid imaginations and are learning the difference between fantasy and fact. You can help by talking with your child about what's real and what isn't. "Do talking purple dinosaurs really exist? Let's look up dinosaurs in the encyclopedia and find out."



Sometimes children lie to avoid embarrassment. Confronting your son about eating a cookie without permission may prompt him to say a monster ate it. Remind him to tell the truth, even if he's done something he shouldn't. "It's fun to pretend there are monsters, but they aren't real. What is our rule about having snacks before dinner?"

Pointing out when your child tells the truth will help build honest behavior. For example, if he admits to doing something wrong or tells you about what he has done before you are aware of it, let him know that you're proud of his honesty. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Waiting games

Waiting has become a part of our everyday lives. The next time you hear, "How much longer?" try one of these ideas to occupy your youngsters:



▲ Play word games. Start with a simple word like "up," and take turns thinking of opposites or alternative words. *Examples:* down, left, right.

▲ Take all the change out of your pocket and let your children sort it. Then, show them how to count it out. How much change will make a dollar?

▲ Work on "skip" counting. Practice counting by fives or tens. Say each number and ask your youngsters to repeat them after you.

▲ Try an alphabet search. One person finds an object that begins with the letter "a." The next finds something beginning with "b," and so on. ♥

Read-aloud excitement

Want to add excitement to read-aloud time with your child? Try giving the characters in a book or story their own voices. Here's how:

- First, read the story to yourself once or twice to become familiar with the characters.
- Next, choose one or two traits that make each character distinctive, and think about what kind of voice would reflect those traits. *Examples:* A shy mouse might have a little squeaky voice. A frisky dog might speak very quickly.
- Finally, when you have decided what the characters' voices will sound like, read the book aloud to your youngster. She will think her favorite story has come alive! ♥



PARENT TO PARENT A calming effect

My daughter Amy always seemed to be "bouncing off the walls"—at home, at school, just about everywhere. I didn't know what to do.

My sister's son is also very active, so I asked her for some advice. She suggested that Amy get as much exercise as possible. So, we try to go for a walk or play in the park almost every day. On other days, Amy rides her bike or plays running games with the other kids on our block.

I've noticed that Amy is especially energetic when she's overtired, so I make sure she gets at least eight hours of sleep. The difference these changes have made to her behavior is wonderful—and I'm calmer too! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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