

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Sarah's Daycare and Preschool

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KID BITS

Watch closely

Boost your child's concentration with this fast-paced game. Line up three colored plastic cups upside down, and put a coin under one. Have him watch the cup with the coin as you quickly rearrange the cups for 10 seconds. Then, ask him to tap the cup the coin is under. Was he right? Switch roles, and see if he can stump you.

Getting enough sleep

A good night's sleep prepares your youngster's body and brain for a new day. It may be tempting to let her stay up late or sleep in on weekends and during school breaks, but try your best to keep a consistent schedule. This will help her get the 10–13 hours of sleep she needs each night.

Thanksgiving helper

Involve your child in your Thanksgiving plans. If you're hosting guests, he could hang up coats or refill water glasses. Or if you visit relatives, he might pick out a game to take and share with his cousins. He'll feel proud to contribute, and he'll learn to be a good host or guest.

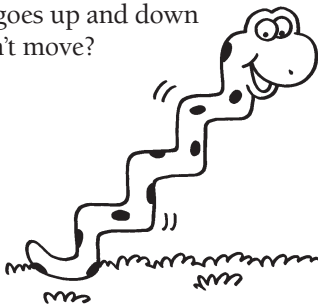
Worth quoting

"You can't use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have." *Maya Angelou*

Just for fun

Q: What goes up and down but doesn't move?

A: Stairs.



Ready to read

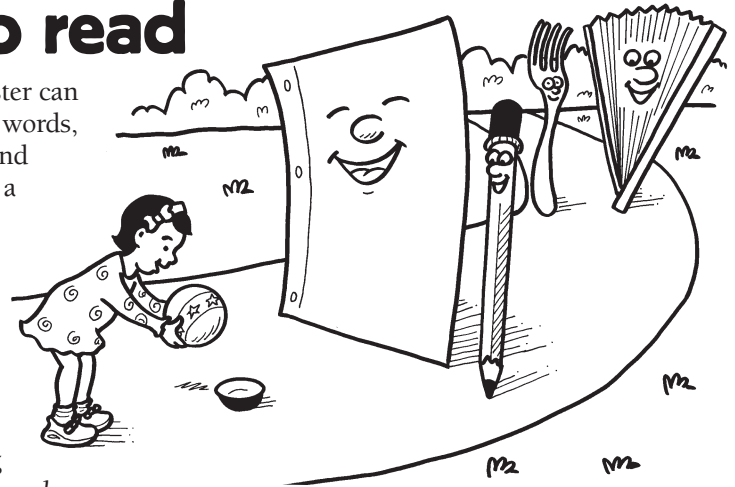
Before your youngster can identify letters or read words, playing with sounds and syllables in words lays a strong foundation for reading. Try these ideas.

Match beginning sounds

Gather pairs of small household objects with beginning sounds that match. *Examples:* ball and bowl, pencil and paper, fork and fan. Mix them all up—can she put each item with its partner? Now have her collect objects for you to pair up. Each time, she'll work on hearing beginning sounds in words.

Spy the rhymes

Play this version of "I Spy," and your youngster will practice hearing rhymes. You might say, "I spy something green that rhymes with *beef*" (*leaf*) or "I spy something on the table that rhymes with *boy*" (*toy*). She could point to or bring you the correct item. Then, let her come up with "I Spy" rhymes for you.



Jump for syllables

Help your child hear individual syllables in words. Think of a familiar word with multiple syllables (*tomato*, *helicopter*). Say the word slowly while she does a different movement for each syllable. Since *tomato* has three syllables, she might hop for *to-*, spin around for *-ma-*, and stomp for *-to*. What four movements will she do for *he-li-cop-ter*?♥

Keep going!

A child with grit knows how to work through challenges and handle setbacks. Use these suggestions to promote a stick-with-it attitude in your youngster:

- Encourage him to use positive phrases like "I can try" or "Can you help?" instead of saying "I can't" or "I don't know how." This shift in thinking will make a big difference! *Tip:* Remember to model positive language when you talk to him. ("I know you can do it!")
- Do a new activity together, such as making your own play dough or bubble solution. It might take a few attempts to get the recipe just right, but you'll show your child that continuing to try leads to learning—and fun.♥



Good behavior habits start early

Encourage your child to behave well by letting him know what you expect—and following through if he doesn't meet your expectations. Here's how.

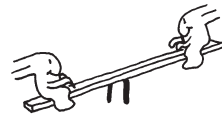
Be clear and positive. Tell your youngster how you want him to behave—and that you know he can do it. Before you go into a movie theater, you might say, "We want everyone to be able to hear the movie, so I know you'll



whisper quietly if you need something." Or at bedtime, maybe you'll say, "You've been doing better at staying in bed and not asking for things. I bet you'll do great tonight."

Be consistent. Set consequences that your child can count on. If he talks loudly in the theater, you might take him into the lobby and explain you'll need to leave if he does it again. Or if he gets out of bed to ask for another snack, perhaps you will have him go to bed earlier the next night. It

may not be easy to follow through, but when he sees you mean what you say, he'll be more likely to meet your expectations in the future.♥



Q & A Holding a pencil

Q: I'm not sure my son holds his pencil correctly. Is it important for him to hold it a certain way?

A: A strong "tripod" grip will help your child write comfortably. That means he should grasp his pencil between his thumb, forefinger, and middle finger.



If your youngster isn't using a tripod grip, try this when he writes. Let him hold a small toy, such as a bouncy ball, in his palm with his ring and pinky fingers. That will keep those two fingers out of the way, leaving the other three to grip the pencil.

Or if your son's fingers are too far from the tip of his pencil, give him a pencil that's about half the length of a regular one. He'll need to move his fingers down to control it.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Put together a healthy plate

What does a nutritious meal look like? Your youngster will find out with this activity.

Materials: paper plate, marker, old magazines or grocery circulars, scissors, white paper

Help your child draw lines to divide a paper plate into four sections, two slightly larger and two a little smaller (see choosemyplate.gov). She can label the bigger sections "Vegetables" and "Grains" and the smaller ones "Fruits" and "Protein." Then, she could cut a small paper circle to represent "Dairy."

Browse through magazines together, and have her cut out healthy foods from each group. *Examples:* Strawberries (fruit), spinach (vegetables), brown rice (grains), chicken (protein), milk (dairy).

Let her experiment with different combinations of foods, creating delicious meals by putting photos into the right sections of the plate. Each time, she'll see that a healthy plate has a variety of foods. Now make it for real! Your youngster might fill up her dinner plate that looks a lot like her favorite paper plate.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Conferences: Involve your child

I had my first parent-teacher conference last year, and afterward my daughter Vera was worried about why I met with her teacher. I explained that having a meeting is one way her teacher and I work together to help her learn.

This year, I decided to talk to Vera about the conference ahead of time. I asked if there was anything she'd like me to

say or ask. And there was! She wanted her teacher to know that she likes math group—and she loves being the calendar helper. Vera also wondered if her class will get to study butterflies this year.

I wrote down Vera's ideas and added my own, such as "What does she like to do during playtime?" and "What can I do at home to help her learn?"

I feel prepared for this year's conference, and Vera is looking forward to hearing what her teacher says.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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