

Early Years

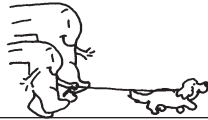
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

March 2020

Sarah's Daycare and Preschool

Jody Aycocock, Director

KID BITS



Getting organized

Let your child help you set up a filing system for his paperwork. He can pick a different color folder for each type, such as green for school progress reports and yellow for notes from his checkups. He'll learn about organization, and you'll be less apt to misplace anything.

Manners on display

When you see your youngster doing something polite, take a picture of her. Maybe you notice her putting her napkin in her lap before she eats a snack or writing a thank-you note to her aunt for a gift. Show her the photo so she sees what her good manners look like.

DID YOU KNOW?

Eating a healthy breakfast boosts your child's concentration in school and keeps him satisfied until lunch. Look for shortcuts to make busy school mornings easier, like hard-boiling eggs and cutting up fruit the night before. On weekends, make double batches of whole-grain pancakes or muffins to reheat during the week.

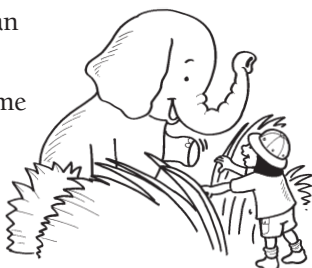
Worth quoting

"There is nothing in a caterpillar that tells you it's going to be a butterfly."
R. Buckminster Fuller

Just for fun

Q: Where would you find an elephant?

A: The same place you lost her!



A smart approach to screen time

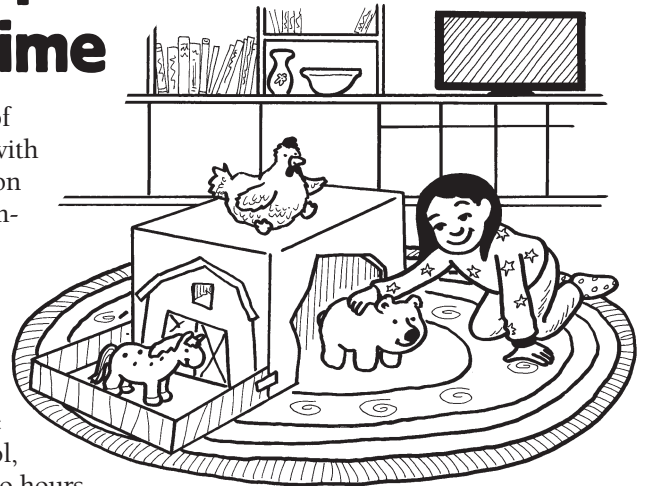
Your child needs plenty of time to play and to interact with people—and that's one reason that experts recommend limiting her screen time to no more than an hour a day. Here are strategies to use.

Set rules

Designate times when electronics are off-limits, like in the morning before school, during meals, and at least two hours before bedtime. Put your youngster in charge of powering down devices—she'll feel important and be more likely to cooperate. Also, consider keeping electronics out of her bedroom so she's supervised when she does have screen time.

Make a travel kit

It can be tempting to let your child entertain herself with electronics when you're on the go. Instead, help her make a special screen-free kit to keep in the car. You could include paper and crayons, a book of mazes, toy cars, and



Legos. Add a small tray she can use as a surface for drawing and playing.

Encourage creative play

Your youngster may turn to electronics if she doesn't know what else to do. Together, come up with a list of interesting unplugged activities. *Examples:* Invent a board game by combining pieces from existing games. Create an obstacle course with outdoor toys (hula-hoop, wagon). Design habitats for stuffed animals. ♥

Ready to spell

When your youngster begins writing his name or adding letters and words to drawings, he's discovering that letters go in a specific order to make words. Encourage his spelling efforts with these tips:

- Let your child help you spell. While making a grocery list, you might say, "What letter does *milk* start with?" Say each letter as you write it, then say each word as you finish it. ("M-i-l-k. Milk.")
- After your youngster draws a picture, suggest that he write about it. Help him think about which letters to write: "I like your dragon. Can you write any letters in the word *dragon*?" Whether he spells it correctly or not, he can read his writing to you. ♥



Colorful science

“Red and blue make purple!”

With these activities, your child can make scientific observations and predictions while he investigates the science of colors.

1. Dye water. Have your youngster line up three glasses and measure 1 cup water into each. Then, he should add 10 drops of a different-color food dye (red, yellow, and blue) to each.

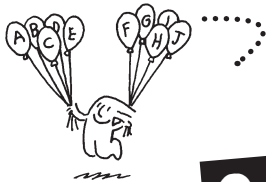


2. Watch colors mix. Tell your child that red, yellow, and blue are primary colors—they mix together in different ways to make all the other colors!

To see this with his own eyes, he can roll up a paper towel and put one end into the red water and the other end into the yellow. The towel soaks up the colors and turns orange where they meet. Red and yellow make orange! What does he predict will happen when he connects yellow and blue

water? Let him try it and find out (they’ll create green). Finally, he could rearrange the cups and connect red and blue. It’s purple!♥

PARENT TO PARENT



Teaching acceptance

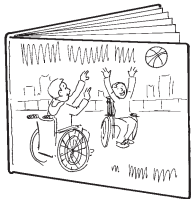
At the store last week, my daughter Faye noticed a family using sign language. In the car, she asked me what they were doing with their hands. I explained that some people who can’t hear use sign language to communicate.

On our next trip to the library, Faye wanted to check out a book about sign language. We also found a story about a little girl who was learning to sign. Although the character communicated in

a different way than we do, my daughter noticed that she had a lot in common with her.

They both have pet dogs and big brothers, for example.

Now when Faye is curious about the way someone looks or acts, we try to find a book that will help her understand. She is discovering that you can be different from someone but also the same.♥



Q & A

Tame power struggles

Q: I often find myself negotiating with my preschooler about whether he’ll wear shorts when it’s cold out or take a bath before bed. How can I break this cycle?

A: Children enjoy knowing their opinions are important. Your son is probably looking for choices that let him have a say.

Consider giving him options, like whether to wear jeans or corduroys or which bath toys he’d like to play with. You might get creative if the situation is non-negotiable, such as wearing a helmet when he rides his bike. For example, pretend the helmet is talking—you could make it say, “I want to go for a bike ride, too!”

Having his way will make your son feel like he has some control, and you’ll avoid a power struggle.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Workouts for little hands

Play time is prime time for building the hand strength and coordination your youngster needs for drawing, buttoning, and zipping. Try these ideas.

Tweezers

Have your child duct-tape an empty cardboard tube vertically to the refrigerator at her eye level. Put a bowl underneath. Now she can use tweezers to pick up small objects (cotton balls, dry beans), drop them into the tube, and watch them fall out into the bowl.

Hole-punch

Get construction paper or index cards in a variety of colors. Let your youngster punch holes all over several sheets or cards. She can save the tiny circles and glue them on paper to make a mosaic.

Toothpicks

Find a container with small holes in the lid, such as a cheese shaker or a spice jar.

Encourage your child to drop toothpicks into the holes. She could dump them out and play again.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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 www.rfeonline.com
 ISSN 1540-5567