

Early Years

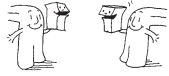
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Elementary Counselors

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KID BITS



Appreciating teachers

A teacher can never have too many school supplies! Help your youngster say thanks for a great year by covering an empty juice or frosting can with construction paper and decorating it with stickers. He can fill it with sharpened pencils, dry-erase markers, or other items tied together with a colorful ribbon.

Magazine mania

Spark your child's interest in reading by introducing her to magazines just for little ones. She can learn about animals in *Wild Animal Baby*, read stories in *Chirp*, and explore science and nature in *Click*. Look for magazines at the library, or perhaps share a subscription with another family.

What's the sequence?

Encourage your youngster to draw pictures showing how things happen in order. For example, a banana is green when we buy it, yellow when it's ready to eat, and brown if it sits too long. Can she draw another sequence? *Examples:* a caterpillar becoming a butterfly, a tree changing throughout the year.

Worth quoting

"Play is the highest form of research."
Albert Einstein

Just for fun



Q: How many balls of string would it take to reach the moon?

A: Just one, if it's long enough!



A happy camper

Keep your child learning all summer long by playing "camp." Together, decide on weekly or monthly themes, and try ideas like these.

Research

Check out a library book about your child's topic (oceans, outer space). You might read *The Ocean Alphabet Book* by Jerry Palotta or *The Planets* by Gail Gibbons, for example. Then, take a field trip so your youngster can learn more. Visit an aquarium or a tropical fish store, and ask an employee questions about animals that live in the sea. Or go to a planetarium or space museum. Viewing hands-on exhibits, seeing shows, and reading plaques will help your youngster learn more while he's having fun.

Projects

Arts and crafts let your child use what he has learned. For an ocean-themed camp, let him make a mural to hang on the wall. He can draw a scene with underwater plants and animals and tear tissue or construction paper into tiny pieces and glue them onto the sea creatures. Or if his



topic is space, he could make a solar system mobile. Let him draw, label, and cut out each planet. Hole-punch them, thread yarn through the holes, and help him tie them to a plastic clothes hanger.

Games

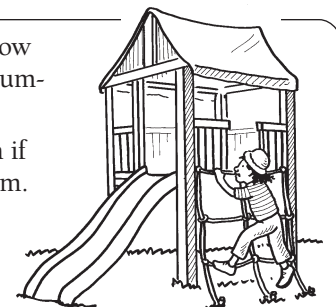
Wrap up your camp with activities that get your youngster moving. Pretend to be ocean creatures and play tag in a swimming pool. Or try solar system basketball. Ask your child to think about the planets' sizes and find balls to represent them (a golf ball for Mercury, a tennis ball for Earth, a beach ball for Jupiter). Take turns throwing the balls into a goal, such as a recycling bin. ♥

Summer schedule

In school, a regular routine lets your youngster know what to expect and helps her day go smoothly. This summer, try setting up your own routine at home.

- Get up around the same time each morning—even if your child isn't going to day care or a summer program.
- Find time every day to visit the playground or go out in the yard together.
- Set a summer bedtime. It may be later than during the school year, but try to keep it consistent.

Tip: Post a daily schedule on the refrigerator. List activities (meals, playground, bedtime), and have your child draw a picture beside each one so she'll remember what it says. ♥



Ready for next year

Is your child headed to kindergarten in the fall? Here are three skills she'll need—and ideas to help her practice them.

1. Communicating

Encourage your youngster to talk instead of whining when she gets upset or needs help. You might say, "I understand you better when you use your words." Then, help her practice what to say. *Examples:* "I'm feeling frustrated"; "Can you help me, please?"



2. Listening

Play games like Mother, May I?, Simon Says, and Red Light, Green Light. They'll get your child in the habit of listening closely to her teacher's instructions. Or have her make a paper-bag puppet. Then, put it on your hand and make it "talk" when you give her directions. She'll watch the puppet and listen more closely.

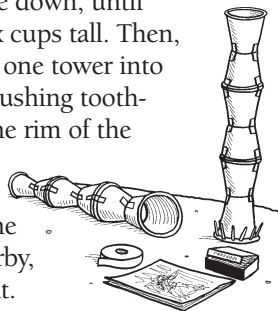
ACTIVITY CORNER

Build a skyscraper

If you live in a city or have visited a city, your youngster may have seen skyscrapers. With this activity, she can see how they stay strong in the wind.

Have your child build two "skyscrapers" outside. For each one, she should place a cup upside down and tape a second cup on top, right side up. Help her continue taping together cups, with every other one upside down, until each tower is six cups tall. Then, help her anchor one tower into the ground by pushing toothpicks through the rim of the bottom cup

into the dirt. She can stand the other tower nearby, but not anchor it.



Have her wave a magazine up and down next to each tower. What happens? (The unanchored building will fall down.) Explain that in real skyscrapers, a hole is dug for a foundation, and the building is anchored with steel and concrete.

Idea: Take her into the basement of your house or another building. She can notice that part of the building is in the ground—that is the foundation.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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3. Participating

Give your youngster a variety of experiences so she'll feel comfortable taking part in school activities. If she's starting a new school next year, plan a visit. The two of you might join an older sibling for lunch in the cafeteria or go with friends to the school playground this summer. ♥



Q & A

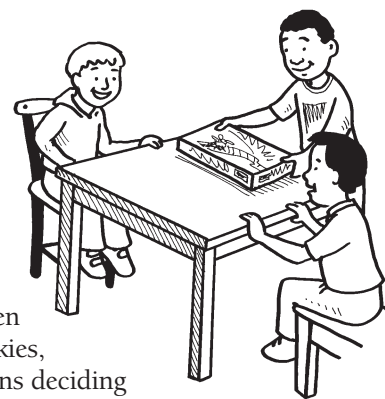
Getting along

Q: When my son has two friends over, someone always feels left out. How can I teach him to play with more than one friend?

A: It takes time and practice for youngsters to get along in a group. The next time your son has two friends over, planning ahead can help.

Together, think of activities that all three children can do, such as playing a board game, baking cookies, or sculpting with clay. You might let them take turns deciding what to do next.

Also, plan to stay nearby and be available in case they need help. If one child is playing alone and seems happy, you don't need to step in. But if he's upset, you might say to the others, "I think he'd like to join you. Let's think of a way everyone can play."♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Thrifty school shopping

Last year I needed to cut back on my spending, and that included my child's school supplies and fall clothes. So, as soon as I got the supply list from the school, I started carrying it with me everywhere. On the back, I made a list of the clothes my daughter Chloe needed to start school, such as bigger pants and new sneakers.

Then, when we ran errands, I'd look for items on sale, like crayons, glue sticks, or jeans. Chloe got involved, too.



She crossed items off the list, and when we got home, she put everything in her bottom dresser drawer. She loved watching her "school drawer" fill up and couldn't wait for school to start.

I saved a lot of money shopping this way. Money is still tight, so I'm going to do the same thing this year. Chloe and I are learning to be smarter shoppers—and we've discovered we can be thrifty without giving up what we need.♥