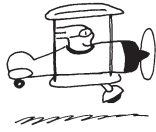


# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2018



Ft. George Community Enrichment Center  
Carolyn L. Wiggins, Executive Director

## KID BITS

### A growing attention span

Suggest an activity your child can do that requires a lot of concentration, such as lining up dominoes to knock down, stacking cups to build a tower, or drawing a path through a maze. Then, try not to interrupt. Staying focused on his task will stretch his attention span.

### Spread the word

Here's a secret for boosting your youngster's self-esteem. Let her overhear you say positive things about her to others. ("Samantha is such a big help with her baby brother.") You'll make her feel good about herself and encourage a repeat performance of her behavior.

### Winter break organization

Getting organized during your child's winter break can prepare your family to start the new year off right. Give him a sense of purpose by assigning jobs. For example, he might decorate a bin to hold hats and gloves or bag up outgrown clothes to donate.

### Worth quoting

"The beginning is always today."  
Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley

### Just for fun

**Q:** How do you stop a skunk from smelling?

**A:** Put a clothespin on its nose!



## Everyday vocabulary boosters

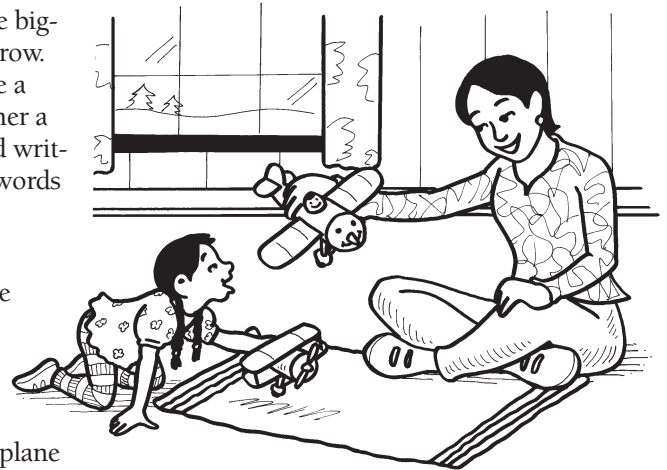
The more different words your youngster hears, the bigger her vocabulary will grow. That's important, because a strong vocabulary gives her a head start on reading and writing. Help her learn new words each day with these tips.

### Comment

Talk about what you're doing or thinking when you play with your child. If you're playing airport, you might say, "The *pilot* is landing her plane on the *runway*." Or if you're building with blocks, you could tell her, "I'm making a tall tower—it's a *skyscraper*."

### Add on

Look for opportunities to expand on what your youngster says, using less-familiar words. If she says, "I'm coloring the snowman's scarf red-blue-red-blue," maybe you'll add, "I like how you're *alternating* the colors to create a pattern." Or when she shares a funny story about her day, you might reply, "That's *hilarious*."



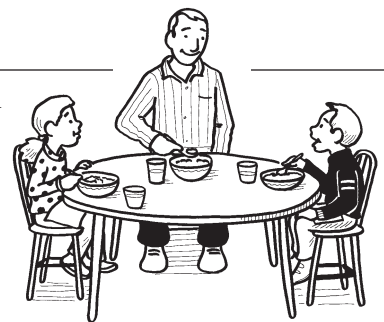
### Explain

Offer a kid-friendly definition when your child asks what a word means. ("Festive describes something that feels cheerful and special.") Then, give an example that's meaningful to her. ("Your birthday party was very *festive*.") *Tip:* If you don't know what a word means, look it up in the dictionary or online together—she'll see that your vocabulary is still growing, too!♥

## Make small moments count

A few minutes is all it takes to connect with your child when life gets busy. Consider these suggestions:

- Eat a leisurely breakfast with your little one. Ask what he's looking forward to that day, and tell him about your own plans.
- Declare random hug breaks. Everyone stops what they're doing and gives each other a squeeze (or two or three).
- Hold a laughing contest. Who can laugh the loudest, quietest, highest, and deepest?
- Set aside time to snuggle and tell family stories.
- Remember to say, "I love you." Simply hearing those three words reminds your youngster that he's important.♥



# Celebrate diversity

Explore the world's cultures in ways your child can understand by discovering foods and games from other lands. Here's how.

**Foods.** The next time you and your youngster grocery shop, invite him to choose one item from the international aisle. Read the package to see where



it's from, or look it up online. Maybe you'll learn that *roti* is a kind of bread that's popular in India. As you eat it, ask him to compare it to the bread you normally buy—he might say that *roti* is flatter. *Idea:* Print out a world map, and let your child color each country you try a food from.

**Games.** Your youngster may be surprised that kids around the world play games similar to those he enjoys. For instance, children in Chile play a version of Duck, Duck, Goose (*Corre, corre la guaraca*), and youngsters in the Philippines play a game similar to Leapfrog (*Luksong baka*). To find more ideas, search online for "children's games around the world," or read library books. Then, pick a few to play as a family.♥

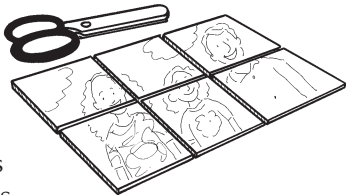
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Family photo puzzles

Print extra copies of family photos, and help your little one cut them apart to create jigsaw puzzles. She'll practice visual discrimination and hand-eye coordination while she puts them back together.

**Materials:** photos, pencil, scissors, glue, cardboard

1. Draw lines to divide each picture into several rows and columns.



2. Have your youngster cut the photos apart along the lines.

3. Ask her to mix up all the pieces and reassemble the pictures. Suggest that she look for clues about where to place each piece. For instance, two pieces that show part of her cousin's blue dress may go next to each other.

4. Once your child knows where all the pieces belong, let her rebuild the pictures by gluing each one onto a piece of cardboard.♥



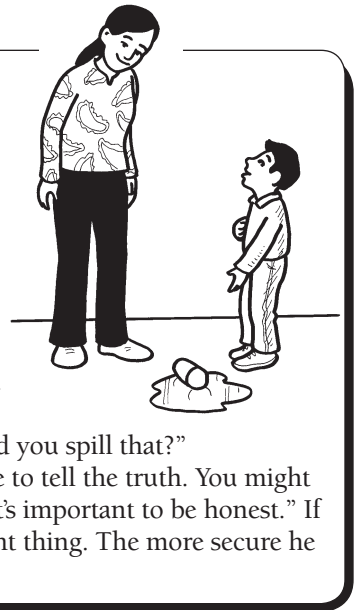
## Q & A

### Telling the truth

**Q:** My five-year-old has a tendency to avoid telling the truth when he thinks he's in trouble. I want him to be honest even when it's tough. What should I do?

**A:** It's common for children to fib when they don't want to disappoint a parent or face punishment. Try avoiding questions that could tempt your son to lie. Instead, focus on his actions and their consequences. For example, if he spills his juice, say, "When we make a mess, we clean it up" rather than asking, "Did you spill that?"

Another way to promote honesty is to make it safe to tell the truth. You might say, "I know it's hard to tell me what happened, but it's important to be honest." If he admits to something, let him know he did the right thing. The more secure he feels, the less likely he'll be to lie.♥



### Your turn, my turn

Your youngster needs to take turns in all sorts of situations, whether she's waiting for a drink at the water fountain or playing a board game with a friend. Weave turn-taking into her daily routine with these ideas:

● Explain why your child has to wait her turn. For example, in the morning, you might point out that her brother will brush his teeth first because his bus comes earlier than hers. Then, it'll be her turn.

● At dinner, give each person at the table a turn to talk without interruption.

You can pass around a special object like a paperweight—only the person holding the item may speak.

● Take turns during your youngster's bedtime routine, too. While you read aloud, you could say, "You turn the page this time. I'll turn the next page."♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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