

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Ft. George Community Enrichment Center
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KID BITS

Staying safe

Talking to your youngster about stranger safety is crucial. But it's also important to let him know he should tell you if anyone—stranger or not—makes him feel uncomfortable. Also, explain that he needs your permission to go someplace with anyone, even if it's a person he knows.

Sibling squabbles

It's normal for siblings to fight. But when you need a break from the latest chorus of "She's staring at me!" try this. Rather than refereeing, calmly send your children to play in separate areas until they cool down. They'll get the message that you won't take sides in an argument.

Try, try again

When you make a simple mistake, ask your youngster for advice. "Oops, I cut this wrapping paper too short. Any ideas for how to fix it?" Then, try his suggestion. Maybe he'll say you could tape another piece to the end. You'll show him that you value his opinion—and help him learn to persevere.

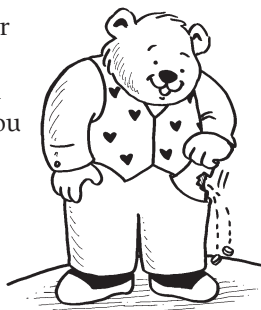
Worth quoting

"A good laugh is sunshine in the house." *William Makepeace Thackeray*

Just for fun

Q: You have four nickels in your pocket. Two fall out. What do you have in your pocket now?

A: A hole!



Nursery-rhyme engineering

How could Humpty Dumpty avoid cracking? How might the Itsy Bitsy Spider catch her dinner after climbing up the water spout? All it takes is a little engineering! Read nursery rhymes together, then try these projects that build your youngster's engineering skills.

Safety suit

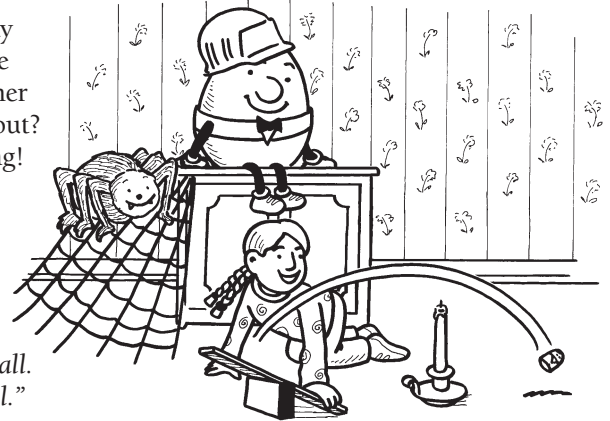
"Humpty Dumpty sat on a wall.
Humpty Dumpty had a great fall."

Hard-boil some eggs, and have your child design a device that would keep Humpty Dumpty safe. She might wrap "Humpty" in a sponge and use rubber bands to buckle him in. She could test her design by dropping Humpty on the floor. If he cracks, she can redesign and test again.

Candlestick catapult

"Jack be nimble, Jack be quick, Jack jump over the candlestick."

Suggest that your youngster create a catapult to launch Jack safely over a candlestick. Set an unlit candle on the floor. Then, let her balance a ruler on a block (like a seesaw) and put a toy figure ("Jack") on one end. When she pushes



down on the other end, Jack "jumps" over the candle! If Jack doesn't make it, your child can make adjustments.

Sticky spiderweb

"The Itsy Bitsy Spider climbed up the water spout. Down came the rain and washed the spider out."

Have your child stack three craft sticks, fan them out, and glue them together in the center. Then, she can weave yarn around them into a "spiderweb." Will the web catch the spider's dinner? To test her design, she could crumple paper into tiny balls (to represent flies) and toss them at the web while you hold it up. Encourage her to reinforce any holes with more yarn if a fly gets through.♥

I ♥ you

Strong parent-child bonds provide little ones with a sense of security and boost their confidence. Give your youngster a case of the "warm fuzzies" with these tips for saying "I love you":

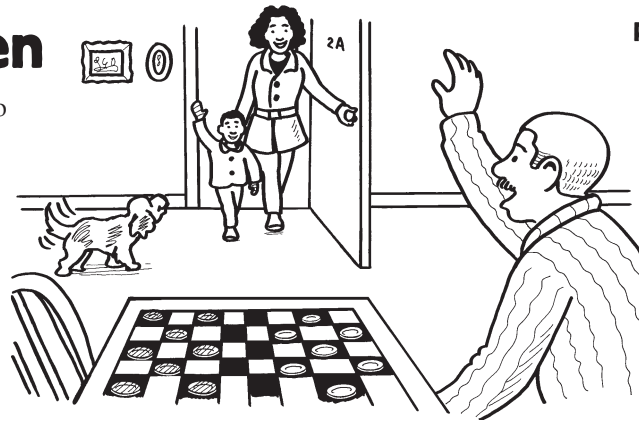
- Use a comparison: "I love you like ____ loves ____." For example, "I love you like Winnie the Pooh loves honey."
- Set aside a special time with your child and do his favorite activities, such as visiting a playground.
- Invent a secret "I love you" signal for each other, perhaps squeezing his hand three times.
- Write a love note to your youngster, and seal it in an envelope. Deliver his "mail" to him in person.♥



Be a good citizen

It's easy to encourage your child to become a good citizen. These ideas will show how obeying rules, serving others, and taking care of property make your community a safer, more pleasant place for everyone.

Point out rules you follow. When you walk the dog on a leash, buckle your seat belts, or use a crosswalk, point out that you're being good citizens. Ask him how obeying laws like these keeps people (and pets!) safer. He might say that the leash prevents his puppy from running into the street.



Reach out to others. Let your child do age-appropriate community service. For instance, if a family loses their home in a fire, have him help you pick out a toy to donate. Or take him with you to play a game or do a craft with an older neighbor who lives alone.

Show respect for property. Together, think of ways you each take care of property you share with others. Maybe your

child will say he returns library books on time so others can read them. And you might tell him how you refill the copier paper at work if you notice it's running low.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Good impressions

All you need are household objects and play dough for this activity. Your youngster will practice paying attention to detail—an important skill for identifying letters and numbers. Here's how.



1. Gather items that can be used to make impressions in play dough. Good examples include coins, a key, a comb, a potato masher, and small toys.
2. Let your child roll the dough flat. While she keeps her eyes closed, choose an object, and press it in the dough to make an impression.
3. Now she can open her eyes and try to identify the item you used by comparing the objects to the impression.
4. Once she figures it out, let her roll out the dough again and make a print for you.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Make healthy snacks together

Since my daughter Sophia loves to play chef in her toy kitchen, I decided to encourage her to cook for real. I thought this would help her become more independent—and eat better, too.

Now when she comes home, we fix a nutritious snack together. Sometimes we use a recipe, but most of the time we get creative and come up with our own.

One of our favorite snacks is mini pizzas. Sophia puts whole-wheat English muffins on a cookie sheet, spoons pizza sauce on top, and sprinkles on shredded low-fat mozzarella cheese. Other times we make “ants on a log”—she spreads cream cheese on celery sticks and tops them with raisins.

Sophia gets a kick out of “cooking,” and I like knowing that she's eating healthy snacks.♥



Q & A

Is my child on target?

Q: My son seems to pick up some skills more slowly than his classmates do. His teacher said he shows no signs of a developmental delay, although I can't help but worry. What should I do?

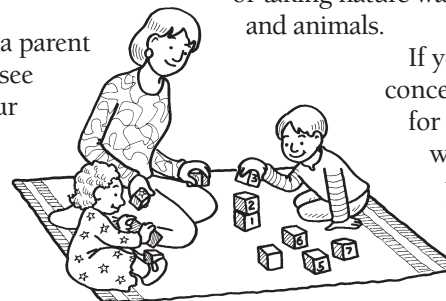
A: You can feel confident that your son's teacher observes students closely to discover what they know—and whether they need extra help.

However, it's hard as a parent not to worry when you see other kids do things your child is still working on. It may help to keep in mind that children learn and develop at different rates. One student might pick up

counting right away while another might learn to write his name first.

Try focusing on helping your son develop a love of learning. Show interest in the work he brings home. Snuggle up and read aloud to him. And do playful learning activities together, such as singing counting songs, building with blocks, or taking nature walks to observe plants and animals.

If you continue to have concerns, ask the teacher for a conference. She will update you on your son's progress, and you can ask about ways to help him at home.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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