

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Fort George Community Services, Inc.

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KID BITS



What day is it?

Give your youngster practice using a calendar. Each morning, ask him to announce the date. ("Today is Monday, May 18!") Suggest that he keep track of the date by crossing off each day's square before he goes to bed.

Safe in the sun

Your child needs sunscreen every time she goes outside, even on cloudy days. Apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), and reapply every 2 hours. It's also a good idea to play in the shade when the sun's rays are the strongest (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

Thank you, teacher!

Show appreciation for the teacher—and have fun with your youngster at the same time. How? Bake cookies or muffins together, and then take them to school. No time to cook? Help your child pick out fresh treats at a bakery.

Worth quoting

"There are not seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million." *Walt Stieff*

Just for fun

Q: What is brown, hairy, and wears sunglasses?

A: A coconut on vacation.



Destination: Summer learning

Treat each place your family goes this summer as a leg of your child's learning journey. Here are activities to try right in your community.

Library

Help your youngster sign up for the library's summer reading program. Then, visit regularly to check out books from the list. Participating in the program is an easy way to find high-quality books for kids her age, and she'll enjoy tracking her progress. Also, get a calendar of library events. Let her circle ones to attend together like a story hour, board game night, or sing-along.

Parks

Explore science and nature at local parks. Suggest that your child use index cards to make "trading cards" for animals and plants she spots in each park. She could draw and label a squirrel, moss on a tree trunk, and a patch of bluebells. Now let her keep her cards in a zipper



bag to take to each new park you visit. Does she see any of the same things in different parks?

Public transportation

Your child can learn a lot from riding buses, trains, and subways. Look at the transit map together. Point out where you are and where you're going. Have her count the stops in between, then count down to your destination. Also, talk about what's outside the window. She might compare scenery in a rural area (cows, crops, barns) with sights in a town (shops, traffic lights, taxis).♥

Smooth transitions

Switching from one activity or place to another can be tough for little ones. Try these strategies to make transitions easier for your youngster.

● **Give a heads-up.** Help your child gradually prepare to switch gears. You might tell him, "We're going to eat dinner in five minutes. It's time to start cleaning up your toys." Then, remind him again when there are two minutes left.

● **Sing songs.** Invent "getting ready" lyrics for familiar tunes. For instance, sing "Coat, Backpack, Shoes, and Hug" ("Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes") together in the morning. This playful idea will remind your youngster exactly what he needs to do as he prepares to leave the house and go to school.♥



Sights and sounds of respect

The first step toward being respectful is knowing what respect looks like and sounds like. Help your child understand respect with these ideas.

Looks like. When you read to your youngster, have him be on the lookout for respectful people. Maybe he'll see an athlete shaking hands with an opponent in a biography. Then, suggest that your child draw a picture of



himself being respectful. His scene might show him knocking on a closed door (respect for privacy) or throwing away trash at the playground (respect for property).

Sounds like. Brainstorm words and phrases that show respect. Your youngster might name *please* and *thank you* as respectful words. You could point out that using titles before people's names (Mrs., Mr., Aunt, Uncle) shows respect, too. Then, have him listen carefully for examples of respect throughout the day, and share new ones he hears.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a marble run

Let your youngster design a maze that a marble could roll through. She'll explore engineering—and end up with a new homemade toy.

Materials: tape, empty cereal box, safety scissors, pencil, straws, marble

1. Help your child tape a cereal box closed and cut off the front panel.
2. Place the box open side up, and have your youngster label one corner "Start" and the opposite corner "Finish."



3. She can cut straws to different lengths and tape them inside the box to create a zig-zag path wide enough for a marble.

4. To play, your youngster should place a marble at the start and tilt the box in different directions to move the marble through the maze. Can she get it all the way to the finish? If not, she could redesign the maze by moving the straws around, and then retest.♥

Q & A

Expand your child's curiosity

Q: My son asks a lot of questions. Sometimes I don't know the answers. What should I say?

A: It's great that your little one is so curious. When he asks a question you can't answer, the best response is, "I don't know. Let's find out!" Then, look for the answer together—he'll see that grown-ups are learning, too.

For instance, if your child asks how fireflies light up, check out a library book or search "fireflies" online. Or ask someone you think would know like an uncle who studies insects as a hobby. Use what you learn as a jumping-off point for even more learning. What other animals light up? Why do they light up? Where do they live?

Finally, share what you wonder about, too ("Why does lightning come before thunder?"), and the two of you can search for the answer.♥



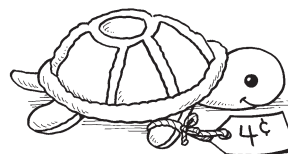
Money basics

"How much does that cost?" "Why can't I buy it?" Youngsters have a lot to learn about money. Use these kid-friendly tips:

- Talk about needs and wants. A simple way to do this is to make a grocery list together. Say, "Let's write what we need first. Then, we can add what we want." Start with necessities like bread, fruit, and toilet paper. At the bottom,

your child might put ice cream or cookies.

- Play toy store to teach your youngster about budgeting. Have her put price tags on her toys, and give her a set number of pennies. She can choose how many to spend and how many to save, then pretend to shop. She'll practice making spending decisions based on how much money she has left.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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