

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Mono County Office of Education - Dr. Stacey Adler
First 5 Mono County

KID BITS

Everyday math

Work math words like *bigger*, *smaller*, *more*, and *fewer* into everyday conversations with your youngster. You'll help her begin to understand math concepts and make comparisons. For instance, ask her which of her toy dragons is *bigger* and which is *smaller* or whether she has *more* or *fewer* red socks than blue socks.

Calming down

When your child needs to settle down, try this strategy. Sing a song together several times. Each time you repeat the song, get a little quieter, until you are singing in a whisper. You'll probably notice that your youngster is calmer. *Tip:* Suggest that he do this by himself when he is angry or upset.

Career day

Children love learning about the jobs that grown-ups do. Ask your youngster's teacher if you could volunteer to talk to the class about your job. Or see if you can arrange a field trip to your business. Your child will be proud to "share" you and your job with her teacher and classmates.

Worth quoting

"One person can make a difference, and everyone should try."
John F. Kennedy

Just for fun

Q: What has two legs but cannot walk?

A: Your pants!



Reasons for writing

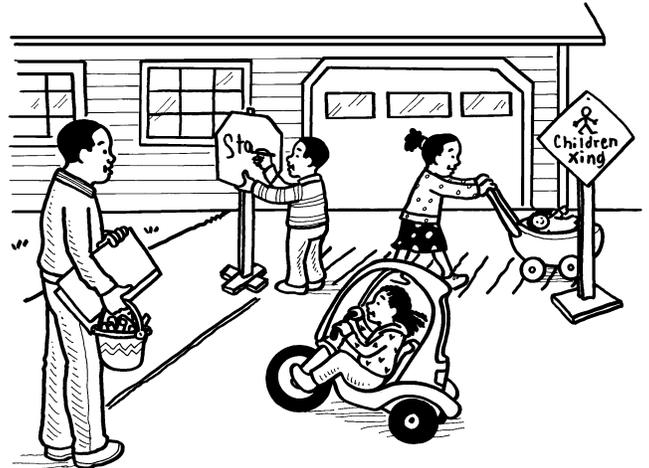
Those squiggles, letters, or invented words that your child writes show he understands that print has meaning. Encourage his efforts by finding more reasons for him to write. Consider these ideas.

Make a sign

Imaginary play offers plenty of chances to write. Your little one might make road signs for his toy cars or a menu for his pretend restaurant. To get ideas, he could look for road signs when you drive around town and write them down ("Stop," "Children Playing"). Or maybe he'll copy the names of foods from packages in your kitchen ("coffee," "waffles").

Keep a journal

Before going to sleep, suggest that your youngster record a memory in a notebook about something he did that day. First, write a fill-in-the-blank sentence for him. *Example:* "Today we went to Jack's house.



The best part was ____." Then, help him print the rest of his memory ("building a tent").

Write captions

When your child draws a picture, ask him to write a caption about it underneath or on the back. You can tell him how to spell the words he wants to write himself, or perhaps he'll dictate the caption to you. If he draws a boat, he might write, "This is the boat I want to sail on this summer."♥

Table manners

Family mealtime is a good opportunity to practice being polite. Use these tips to help your child discover that good manners make a meal more pleasant:

- Encourage your youngster to ask politely for food rather than reaching across others to get it. *Example:* "Please pass the salad."
- Dinner conversations teach your child to listen without interrupting. Let everyone have a chance to share something during the meal, and remind your youngster to wait until others finish before she speaks.
- Discuss ways to be polite even if she doesn't like what's served. She might take a small amount and try a few bites. Explain that words like *yucky* and *gross* aren't polite to the person who cooked the meal or to others who are enjoying the food.♥



How to talk about bullying and teasing

Did you know that bullying can start as early as preschool? That means it's never too early to bring up the topic with your little one. Here's how.

Define it. Give your youngster a clear idea of what bullying looks like or sounds like. For instance, if someone repeatedly calls your child names, hits or pushes her, or deliberately leaves her out, that's bullying.



Read books. Stories make good jumping-off points for discussions. Ask your librarian for books about bullying, such as *Strictly No Elephants* (Lisa Mantchev) or *The Recess Queen* (Alexis O'Neill). Read them aloud, and point out how the characters handled things. What might your youngster do in the same situation?

Make it okay to tell. Let your child know that the first thing to do if she is dealing with bullying is to go to a grown-up for help. Remind her that telling about bullying is not the same as tattling—telling is to get someone out of trouble, while tattling is to get someone in trouble.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Bigger, better bubbles

Turn bubble-blowing into science with this experiment.

Materials: 2 tbsp. dish soap, 1 tbsp. light corn syrup, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water, bowl, spoon, pipe cleaners, timer, paper, pencil

Let your child stir together the dish soap, corn syrup, and water in a bowl. Next, let him make a bubble wand by bending a pipe cleaner to form a loop.

Have him dip his wand into the solution and gently blow to create a bubble. Time how long it lasts before it pops, and record the result.

Then, he can experiment with changing the solution. He might use different amounts of ingredients or leave one out. Help him write down each "recipe." To test them, he should blow a bubble from each new solution, time how long each bubble lasts, and record the results. He'll be using science to discover the best bubble formula!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

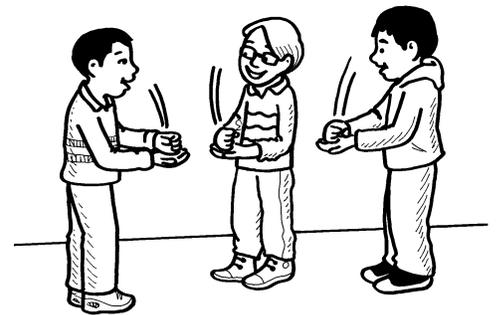
Think creatively

My son Miguel recently learned a fun version of rock, paper, scissors in school. The point is to stretch kids' creative thinking, and now Miguel and his friends play it all the time.

To play, the kids all tap their fists on their palms four times. They say "rock" on the first tap, "paper" on the second, and "scissors" on the third. And the fourth time, they each name any object. For instance, Miguel said, "Rock, paper, scissors, pizza!" while his friend said, "Rock, paper, scissors, book!"

Now each player makes an argument for why his object "wins." Miguel said you need food to survive, and his friend argued that you can read books to learn to make any kind of food.

I love hearing the creative arguments that the children come up with, and they're getting good at defending their ideas.♥



Q & A Avoid overscheduling

Q: I'd like to sign my daughter up for extracurricular activities this spring. How many should I let her choose?

A: Structured after-school activities have many benefits. Your daughter will learn about teamwork and build communication skills while she socializes with other children.

On the other hand, kids this age need plenty of free time to play, so consider starting with

just one activity. She'll get more out of one team or class that she loves than from two or three that wear her out.

To help your child pick an activity, talk to her about what she likes to do (play catch, tumble, arts and crafts). To find out about offerings, stop by the school office or community center, or visit the parks and recreation department's website.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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