

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2014

Haywood County Schools

KID BITS



Show me

Let your youngster know that physical activity is important to you by asking what he did during outdoor play time at school. He might show you how he catches a ball or teach you a game he learned. Or visit the school playground together so he can demonstrate his climbing abilities.

Helping hands

Trace around your child's hands on paper, and ask her to name different ways she is helpful. Maybe she helps her dog by feeding him and helps you by dusting. Together, write each example on a separate finger. Then, hang up her "helping hands" to remind her how helpful she can be.

Learning to focus

Sitting still and paying attention is sometimes tough for energetic youngsters. Have your child work on this by setting aside 5–10 minutes each day for a short activity that requires him to sit and concentrate. *Examples:* Search for animals in a magazine, sort and count coins from his piggy bank.

Worth quoting

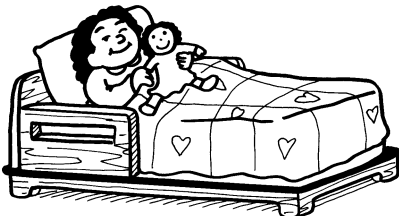
"The only way to have a friend is to be one."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

Just for fun

Q: What question can't be truthfully answered "yes"?

A: Are you asleep?



Great pumpkin exploration

What's big, orange, and full of learning opportunities? A pumpkin! Head to a pumpkin patch or the grocery store, and let your child pick out the perfect pumpkin. Then, use these questions to build her math, science, and language skills.

"How big is it?"

Ask your youngster to estimate how many squares of toilet paper it would take to go around the pumpkin once. Help her carefully wrap a strip around its *circumference*, or widest part, and count the squares. How close was her estimate? She could lay the strip out flat to see how big around the pumpkin is.

"Will it float?"

Fill a bathtub with water, and have your child predict whether her pumpkin will sink or float. What happens when she puts it in the water? Suggest that she try dropping smaller objects in the water, too. She may be surprised by what sinks and what floats. (A pumpkin is big, but



it's not very dense—its molecules aren't tightly packed together—which causes it to float.)

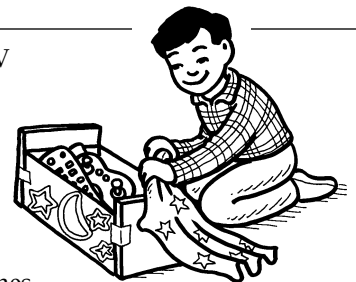
"What words describe it?"

Encourage your youngster to examine her pumpkin closely. She can look at it, touch it, and lift it. Then, take turns naming "describing" words for the pumpkin (*orange, smooth, heavy*). Cut off the top of the pumpkin, and have her scoop out the pulp and seeds. What words might describe the pulp (*slimy, stringy*) and seeds (*small, white*)? ♥

Look, the TV is off!

Make it fun for your youngster to *not* watch TV or play video games with these ideas:

- Have your child help you develop guidelines for screen time. *Example:* "Sunny days are for playing outside." He could draw a picture to go with each idea.
- Let him decorate a shoebox where handheld games, tablets, cell phones, and remote controls can "sleep." Maybe he'll put star stickers on the box and draw a moon to create the sleeping spot.
- Suggest that your youngster make screen-free signs. For instance, he might write "No cell phones. Family eating" and post it in the kitchen. ♥



Feel-good discipline

Did you know that children often behave better when they understand what they're supposed to do, rather than just being told what *not* to do? Gently guide your child toward good behavior with these tips.

1. Give a "redo." Offer your youngster a chance to correct his behavior by himself. *Example:* "Show me your best restaurant manners" instead of "Don't blow bubbles in your milk."



2. Explain your reasons. When you ask your child to do something, it'll make more sense to him if he understands the reason behind it. If he throws a toy, you might say, "Take care of your toys so they don't break" (rather than "Don't throw your toys").

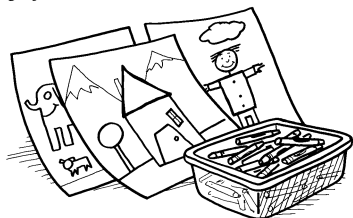
3. Provide pleasant consequences.

Encourage good behavior by offering *positive reinforcement* for it. If your youngster waits quietly while you finish your work, you could say, "Thanks for waiting patiently. Now we have time to play a game." He'll see that behaving well pays off—and be likely to do it more often. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Start with a shape

This drawing game can teach your youngster about shapes and boost her creativity. And the end result will be homemade coloring pages for you both to enjoy.



Draw a shape (circle, square, triangle, rectangle) in the middle of a sheet of paper. Ask your child to name it, and let her use crayons to turn it into anything she wants. Encourage her to stretch her imagination. For instance, a circle could become a polka dot on a dress or the eye of an elephant. Or she might make a triangle into the roof on a house or one slice of a birthday cake.

When her picture is finished, it's her turn to draw a shape for you. Then, sit together and color your drawings. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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PARENT TO PARENT

Stories about real life

My parents recently retired and moved away. It has been tough for my daughter Maddy, so they've tried to make it a little easier by having weekly video chats and telling her stories.

One night, my dad told her about his day. ("Once upon a time, a grandpa went to Florida. He went fishing and caught a trout.") When he finished, he asked her to tell him a story that started with "Once upon a time, a girl named Maddy..."

At first they had to ask questions like "What did Maddy have for breakfast?" and "Who did Maddy see at the park?" But she quickly got the hang of it. Our new tradition is helping Maddy stay close to her grandparents—and she is learning about storytelling. ♥

Once upon a time...

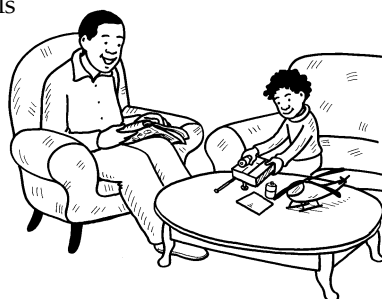


Q & A Relying on yourself

Q: I'd like my son to do more for himself. Where should I start?

A: Young children love to show how "big" they are. Look for small, everyday ways to let him show how capable he is.

For example, if he tells you the batteries in his toy are dead, show him how to replace them by matching up the plus and minus signs. Next time, he might be able to do it by himself—with close supervision.



There are other things he can learn to do for himself, too, like refilling the tape dispenser, emptying the pencil sharpener, and checking the weather to pick out clothes to wear.

Or if he forgets something, prompt him instead of telling him what to do. ("What do you need to get before we go to school?") He'll eventually learn to prompt himself. ("What should I put in my backpack?") ♥