

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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## KID BITS



### When did that happen?

Your child will better understand *yesterday*, *today*, and *tomorrow* if you use the words in everyday conversation. While helping her lay out clothes for school, you might say, "Yesterday you wore a skirt and sweater. Today you are wearing jeans and a sweatshirt. What would you like to wear tomorrow?"

### Be a secret pal

Together, do something nice for a neighbor—without telling the person about it. For example, you could sneak over and shovel snow from a sidewalk or pick up branches from a yard. Or your youngster might secretly do one of his sister's chores. He'll discover he feels proud of himself, even if he's the only one who knows about it.

### DID YOU KNOW?

A car seat in the backseat of your vehicle is the safest place for your child to ride. Be sure to follow the height and weight guidelines for your particular seat or booster, as well as your state's law. Learn more about car seat safety at [safercar.gov/parents/car-seat-safety.htm](http://safercar.gov/parents/car-seat-safety.htm).

### Worth quoting

"The trees that are slow to grow bear the best fruit." Molière

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the walrus stand on the marshmallow?

**A:** So it wouldn't fall into the hot cocoa!



## Wonder-filled learning

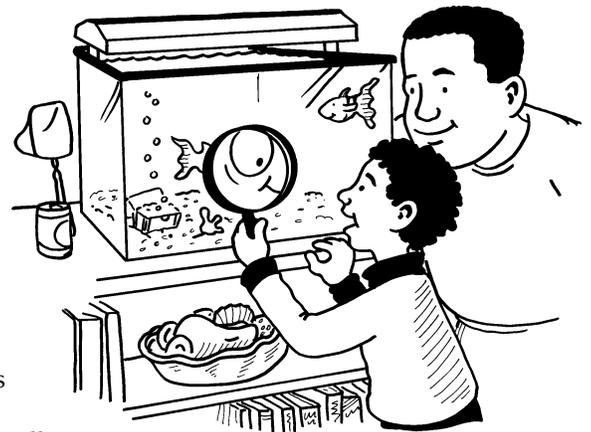
"I wonder..." Those two words can spark curiosity and get your child excited about learning. Guide him with "wonders" like these to motivate him to imagine, explore, and discover.

### Take an up-close look

Your house is full of wonders. Ask your youngster to imagine what his life would be like if he had "magnifying-glass vision." What could he notice that he can't see now? Let him walk around the house with a magnifying glass to find out. Once he sees the tiny fibers on a knitted blanket or the scales on his goldfish, he may start to wonder what everything looks like up close.

### Stop and think

Everyday run-of-the-mill experiences can inspire wonder. In a department store, have your child stand in front of a triple mirror to see all of his reflections. Do they go on forever? If you're at the bank's drive-thru, point out the vacuum tube and have him watch the canister go



up. When he wonders how it works, you can tell him it's like a vacuum cleaner sucking up dirt.

### Create a "wonder board"

Does your youngster wonder how big ships can float? Has he ever thought about why he can't keep his eyes open when he sneezes? Let him make a "My Wonder Board" sign for your bulletin board. Then, as he wonders about something, help him write it down and add it to the board. When you have free time, show him how to find the answer in a library book or online.♥

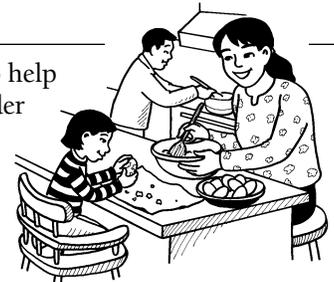
## Make the most of mealtime

Use family meals to enjoy time together and to help your youngster become more responsible. Consider these tips.

**Before:** Get everyone involved in preparation. Your child is more likely to try nutritious foods she helps make. She might wash spinach for a salad or peel hard-boiled eggs.

**During:** Turn off the TV and cell phones, and focus on conversation. Uninterrupted face-to-face time encourages your youngster to practice talking and listening.

**After:** Little ones can clear the table, put away leftovers, and load the dishwasher. The work will go faster, and your child will be pitching in with chores.♥



# Take a stand against bullying

It's normal for youngsters to occasionally tease each other and get into arguments. But if one child repeatedly excludes, threatens, or teases another, it's time for a grown-up to step in. Here's how:

- Watch for warning signs that your youngster is being bullied. She might lose interest in playing with friends, have trouble sleeping, or pretend to be sick so she can stay home from school. If you



could say, "She must feel so sad when you call her names." Next, have your youngster apologize, either in person or by drawing a nice picture for the child. *Note:* Stay in touch with her teacher to make sure the behavior doesn't continue.♥

suspect bullying, talk to her teacher or school counselor. Tell your child that she should always go to an adult for help if anyone threatens or hurts her—and that it isn't the same as tattling.

- If the school contacts you because your youngster takes part in bullying, ask your child to explain what happened. Then, focus on the other person's feelings—you

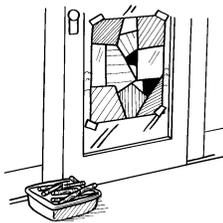
## ACTIVITY CORNER



### Build writing muscles

This colorful "stained glass" project lets your child practice drawing on a vertical surface—which builds big and small muscles he needs for handwriting.

1. Tape a large piece of white paper to a sunny window or glass door at your youngster's eye level.



2. Have him use a black crayon to draw lines dividing the page into random shapes. *Tip:* Tell him to relax his shoulders and hold his wrist out straight.

3. Encourage him to use brightly colored crayons to fill in all of the shapes.

4. When he's finished, admire his stained glass art together. He might even want to make more for other windows.

*Tip:* Give him more practice using vertical surfaces by letting him write and draw on a chalkboard or dry-erase board.♥

### Hello, community helpers!

Would your youngster like to meet a firefighter or a police officer? These ideas will help him learn more about the jobs that community helpers do.

**Visit.** Stop by a fire station, or look for a community event like a police safety fair. The firefighters and police officers can show your child things he can't learn from a book. For instance, a firefighter might let him hold a helmet to see how heavy it is, try on boots, or even sit in a fire truck.



**Pretend.** Encourage your youngster to use imaginary play to explore community helpers. He could line up chairs and pretend to drive a bus, making sure "passengers" (stuffed animals or siblings) get on and off safely. Or he might have toy figures deliver mail or take care of people who are sick or hurt.♥

### Q & A Working with the teacher

**Q:** *I'd love to help my daughter's teacher, but I have a busy schedule. How could I volunteer?*

**A:** Your child's teacher will have plenty of ways you can lend a helping hand. Reach out with a note or a phone call, and tell her when you're available, such as mornings, evenings, or weekends. Maybe you could hang student projects in the hall or

make copies of worksheets before or after school.

Also, let her know about any skills you'd be willing to share. Do you garden? She may ask you to plant vegetables or flowers with students. Or if you enjoy crafts, you might decorate bulletin boards.

Your help is sure to be appreciated. And your daughter will see that her school is important to you.♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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