

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Little Ones Preschool, Inc.
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KID BITS

Teacher appreciation

Encourage your child to make this cute thank-you gift for his teacher. Help him print “Thanks for lessons that will ‘stick’ with me!” on a card. He can sign it and decorate it however he likes. Then, pair his card with a package of stickers for the teacher to use next year.

A summer “bucket” list

As a family, make a wish list of things to do this summer, like swimming at the lake, playing mini-golf, or going fishing. Write each one on a separate slip of paper, and store them in a toy pail. Each week, let your youngster draw a slip, and make plans to do the activity.

DID YOU KNOW?

Studies show that screen time is habit-forming. Keep your child from becoming “hooked” by limiting the time she spends in front of any kind of screen. Also, create screen-free zones—perhaps her bedroom or the basement—to inspire your youngster to play and be active. *Note:* You’ll find more than 100 things to do without a screen at screenfree.org/screen-free-activities.

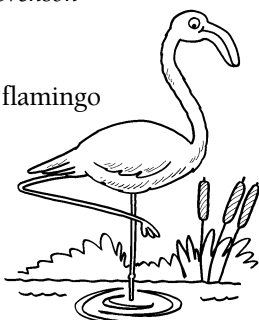
Worth quoting

“I kept always two books in my pocket, one to read, one to write in.”
Robert Louis Stevenson

Just for fun

Q: Why does a flamingo lift up only one leg?

A: Because if it lifted both legs, it would fall over!



Raise kids who love the outdoors

For children, the outdoors is a wide-open playground where imagination, curiosity, and learning can run wild. Cultivate your youngster’s love of the outdoors with these ideas.

Turn your routine “inside out”

Add a dash of the outdoors to everyday activities. Trade your normal craft site for a picnic table at the park, and use natural materials to make art. Weave a dandelion crown, or wrap colorful yarn around sticks and twigs. Read bedtime stories by flashlight on a front step, and observe the stars. Move snack time from the kitchen to a blanket under a tree, and look for animals “snacking,” too.

Encourage a sense of wonder

The outdoors is the perfect place to ask—and try to answer—all kinds of questions about our world. Why do worms come out after it rains? What kind of tree is that? Give your child a notebook for jotting down questions or



sketching pictures of things she wonders about. Let her give her theories, fill her in on what you know, and look up answers later in books or online.

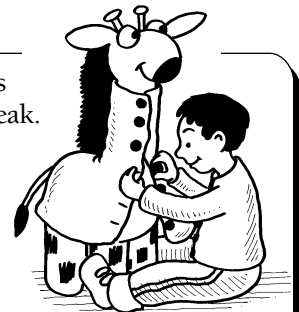
Start a nature club

Team up with families in the neighborhood to explore the outdoors together. You could take turns hosting meetings and suggesting a fun activity. For example, one week members may find and photograph bugs around the yard. Another time, they might make binoculars by taping together two toilet-paper tubes and use them for bird watching. ♥

Countdown to next year

Guess what? You can help set your child up for success next school year with simple activities during summer break. Consider these:

- Practice skills he needs for being independent, such as buttoning, zipping, and snapping his clothes. Be sure to have him work on putting on his own jacket, too.
- Teach your youngster new jobs like making his bed or wiping the kitchen table. Doing small tasks according to your instructions will get him used to following directions in class.
- How many times in a minute can he jump? How many times can he sail a paper airplane? One-minute contests develop your child’s sense of time and make it easier for him to be patient. ♥



Playful discipline

Put fun into your discipline strategies, and life will be more enjoyable—and less frustrating—for both you and your child. Try these suggestions.

Be silly. You need your child to wear shoes. He is the king of bare feet. Rather than demanding, “Put on your shoes, now!” let his shoes make the request. “Pleeeeeease put us on! We want to run.” Giggling will end the power struggle and help him cooperate.



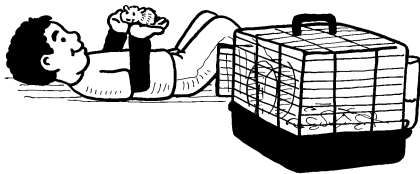
Try a diversion. Your little guy wanted the last red freezer pop—the one his brother is already eating. Head off a meltdown with a distraction. Do something playful and unexpected—toss a ball for him to catch, make fish faces, or sing a song to calm him down and switch the mood.

Q & A Ready for a pet?

Q: My son wants a puppy. I'm afraid he's too young to take care of it and I'll end up doing all the work. Any advice?



A: While caring for a pet is a big job for a young child, it also offers opportunities to build character. When your youngster feeds, grooms, and plays with an animal, he learns about responsibility, kindness, and respect for living things.



Why not start with a pet like a fish or hamster that doesn't require as much maintenance? Your son will need to remember to feed the pet each day, and he can help you clean its bowl or cage. Or have him get a taste of what's involved in being a pet owner by taking care of pets for others. Maybe he could go with you to walk a neighbor's dog or pet-sit his cousin's rabbit for a weekend.

These experiences will help prepare him for caring for a puppy—when you decide you're both ready.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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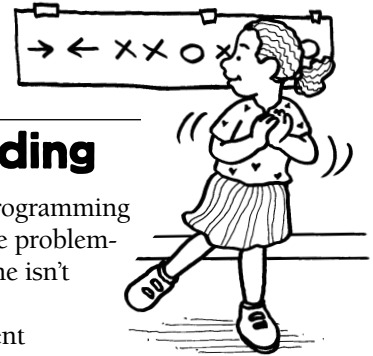
ACTIVITY CORNER

Dance-step coding

Coding is not just for programming computers! Let your youngster practice the same problem-solving skills using pencil and paper—even if she isn't writing yet. Here's how to get her started.

Together, think of symbols to stand for different dance steps, and print them on paper as a key. For example, arrows could mean to take a step forward, backward, right, or left, depending on their direction. An X might mean “clap your hands,” while an O may mean “twirl around.”

Once she finishes, ask her to use the codes to write a “program” for you to follow. As you dance around the living room, be sure to tell her she's thinking like a programmer. Then, make up one for her to follow. Put on music and → ← X X → O X O ↑ ↓ X the night away!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Handling worries

My daughter Madison is a worrier. Her concerns have kept her from doing things like moving out of her sister's bedroom into her own room or using the potty anywhere except at home.

I mentioned the problem to our pediatrician. He let me know that worries are common for this age and suggested a step-by-step approach to try. He used her new room as an example. The doctor

recommended that we play there during the day. Next, he said we might play in the room before bedtime.

Then, we could read a story on the bed for a few nights until Madison is comfortable sleeping there.

Using this system helped Madison overcome her fear of sleeping in her own room. We're still working on the potty issue, but taking things step by step is helping there, too.♥

