

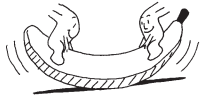
# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2011

Arroyo Grande United Methodist Children's Center  
Ms. Maddy Quaglino, Director

## KID BITS



### What goes where?

When you load a dishwasher or pack a suitcase, you use spatial awareness to arrange items based on their shapes and sizes. Your child can practice this skill by filling a basket with boxes and cans from your pantry. Encourage her to try several arrangements to see how she can fit in the most items.

### Recess helper

For a fun volunteer experience, ask your youngster's teacher if you can join the class during recess. Offer to lead games like kickball or hopscotch. Your child will enjoy having you there—and his teacher will appreciate an extra pair of hands.

### Indoor-day ideas

Your youngster can stay busy on winter days with a box of playtime ideas. Together, brainstorm indoor activities (tea party, blanket fort). Write each one on a slip of paper, have her illustrate it, and put the slips in an empty tissue box. When your child is looking for something to do, she can pull out an idea.

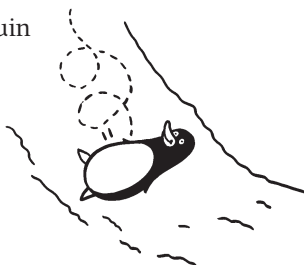
### Worth quoting

"No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting."  
*Mary Wortley Montagu*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What goes black, white, black, white?

**A:** A penguin rolling down a hill.



## Good choice!

"What should I take for show-and-tell?" "Do I want to color or play with trains?" "Which friend will I sit with on the bus?" Learning to make choices like these can help your youngster make bigger decisions later. Try these suggestions for guiding him along.

**Imagine the future.** Your child probably makes many decisions based on how he feels right now. That's because he's still learning to consider the consequences of his choices. You can help him plan ahead by making statements that begin with "I wonder..."  
*Example:* "I wonder what would happen if we didn't wear our jackets to the park." Together, talk through the possibilities (you'd get cold, you couldn't stay long).

**Remember the past.** Thinking about past decisions can help your youngster make new choices. If he's trying to pick something for show-and-tell, ask him to talk about things he has shared in the



past. ("Everyone liked my acorn collection and the photo album of my friends. They didn't say anything about my teddy bear.") Then, help him use that information to make a decision. You might say, "It sounds like unusual things make show-and-tell more interesting."

**Think about the present.** Show your child how you use facts to make a decision, such as what to do on a weekend. Mention options (library, ice skating) and talk them through out loud. "We've already read all our library books, so we need new ones." Encourage your youngster to use the same process when he's faced with a decision.♥

## Daytime, nighttime

Your child will learn about day and night during science time in school. You can encourage her to explore the differences at home with these projects:

- Help her write "Day" on the top of a paper plate and "Night" on the bottom. Then, ask her to draw a picture on each half illustrating what the sky looks like during daytime and nighttime.  
*Idea:* Have her glue black construction paper on the "Night" half and draw stars and a moon with white and yellow crayons.

- Draw a vertical line to divide a poster board in half, and label one side "Daytime" and the other side "Nighttime." Let your youngster cut pictures from old magazines and glue them where they go (a school bus in "Daytime" and a child wearing pajamas in "Nighttime").  
*Idea:* Make a circle in the middle for activities that overlap (toothbrush). ♥



## Writing together

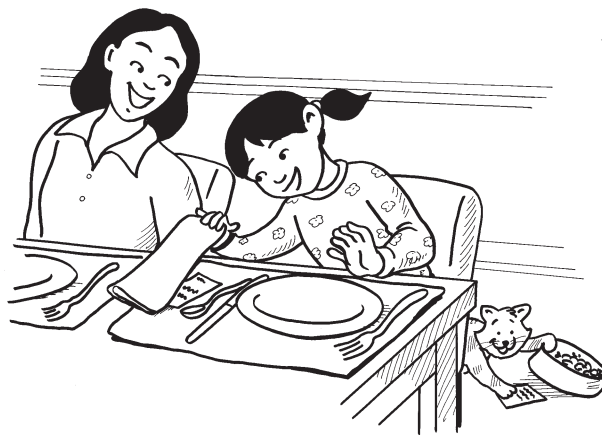
Give your youngster practice writing—and help her enjoy it—by making it fun for the whole family. Try these ideas.

### Notes

Leave notes under family members' napkins or on their plates or pillows. Encourage your child to write notes of her own. Help her write, "I love you" or "Have a great day!"

### Stories

Start your own family book of bedtime stories. Once a week, gather on your youngster's bed and work together to



tell a story. In a spiral notebook, write down what each person says ("Once upon a time, there was a family who loved sports"). The next day, let your child illustrate the story, and that night, read it aloud at bedtime.

### News

Have each person write one sentence about her day on a white board or on a

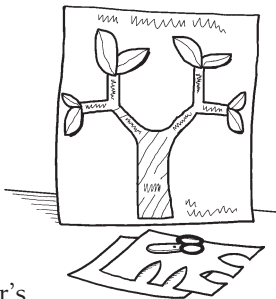
sheet of paper posted on the refrigerator. If your youngster isn't writing yet, she can dictate a sentence to you. *Example:* "My class took a field trip." When everyone has had a chance to add something, help your child read the "daily report" aloud to your family.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Family tree

Making a family tree can show your child who's who among his relatives.

On a sheet of paper, have your youngster draw a tree trunk and write his name on it. Next, he can add two branches growing up from the trunk. Those are for his parents—help him write each name on a separate branch.

Then, explain that his grandparents are his parents' parents. To add them to his tree, he should draw two limbs branching up from his mother's name and two limbs branching up from his father's name. Help him write his grandparents' names in the right places, one per branch.



Finally, let him cut out leaves from green construction paper and glue them on to decorate his tree. Hang his family tree in a spot where everyone can see it—and encourage him to share it with guests! ♥



## Q & A

### Snack smart

**Q:** What are some healthy snacks that I can send to school with my daughter?

**A:** For an energy boost, try to send snacks that include both carbohydrates and protein. Healthy combinations include things like whole-grain crackers with peanut butter (sunflower butter if nuts aren't allowed), skim mozzarella cheese sticks rolled in small whole-wheat tortillas, or hummus with mini whole-grain pita pockets.

You can also use snack time to help your daughter eat more fruits and vegetables each day. Try orange slices or a banana, trail mix with dried fruit (raisins, apricots), or raw vegetables (carrots, snap peas, green beans) with fat-free ranch dressing.

*Idea:* For special birthday snacks, consider whole-grain strawberry or pumpkin muffins instead of cupcakes, and low-fat frozen yogurt instead of ice cream.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### All about money

My son Aidan seemed to think our family had unlimited money. When I told him we didn't have enough to buy something, he'd suggest that I just get more from the ATM.

I decided to give Aidan an allowance to teach him that money is limited.

Everything I read suggested \$1 per year of age, so he gets \$4 each week. He puts \$3 into a savings jar and spends \$1 if we go to the dollar store.

Aidan asked if I get an allowance, so I explained that I get a paycheck—my company pays me money for working. And after I pay the rent and utilities and buy groceries, I save as much of my salary as I can. I also spend a little on fun things like movies and meals in restaurants.

Now that Aidan has his own money, he seems to understand better. He no longer asks for things everywhere we go, and he is good about saving his money each week.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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