

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2012

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

## KID BITS

### Read and listen

Here's a way to help your youngster pay attention when you read aloud. Give her a word or character's name to listen for and an action to do when she hears it. For example, she might rub her tummy for the word *hungry* or clap her hands when you say the main character's name.

### Beanbag toss

This game can improve your child's hand-eye coordination. Cut a round hole in one side of a large cardboard box. Then, fill eight socks with beans and tie them closed. Place the box with the hole facing up, stand 12 feet away, and take turns tossing the beanbags. Score one point for each bag that lands on the box and three points for each one that goes in the hole.

### Going up!

Children love to press elevator buttons, and it's a good way to learn numbers. Help your youngster make an elevator panel on a piece of paper. She can tape it to her bedroom door. While she's pretending to press the button for the correct "floor," encourage her to say the number aloud.

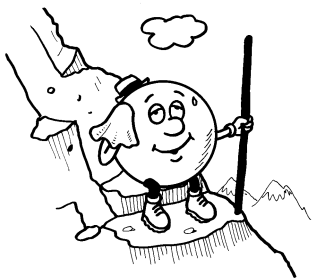
### Worth quoting

"Curiosity is the wick in the candle of learning." *William A. Ward*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why couldn't the orange make it up the mountain?

**A:** It ran out of juice!



## What did you learn today?

A brand-new school year means brand-new things for your child to discover. When he brings home artwork and papers, look them over together. Then, try mixing skills he's working on in class with activities he enjoys at home.

### Sing a song

Does your child's class sing songs about the weather or cleaning up? Ask him to teach you. Your family can sing a weather song during a walk around the block or a clean-up song while putting toys away. *Idea:* Suggest that he make up new lyrics to match your family's activities ("This is the way we clear the table, clear the table ...").

### Play with toys

Toys can build on what your youngster is learning. If he brings home pictures of farm animals, have him fill a shoebox "barn" with plastic cows, pigs, and horses. He can play with them while saying their names and the sounds they make. When his class does a transportation unit, let him use a bowl of water to



make a pretend car wash for toy cars, trucks, and buses.

### Talk about it

Slip new ideas in as you do everyday tasks. If your child is learning *left* and *right*, use the words frequently ("We'll turn right at the corner"). Ask questions that will encourage him to use the words. ("Which hand are you drawing with? Your right hand or your left hand?") Or if he's learning about matter in science, you might tell him, "I froze the water. What is it now?" (ice)♥

## Routines that work

Daily rituals make your youngster's day go more smoothly, and they help her feel secure. Try these suggestions for creating routines at home.

**Morning:** Let your child illustrate a picture checklist with photos from old magazines. She might use a bowl of cereal for "eat breakfast" and a toothbrush for "brush teeth." She can glue the pictures on paper and hang the list in her bedroom.

**Afternoon:** Help your youngster draw a row of boxes on paper and label them with activities (eat snack, feed cat, play). Hang it on the refrigerator, and let her move a magnet from one box to the next when it's time to switch activities.

**Night:** Choose two or three winding-down rituals before bed, like snuggling together while you read or listening to soft music. Then, repeat them every night.♥



# Family participation

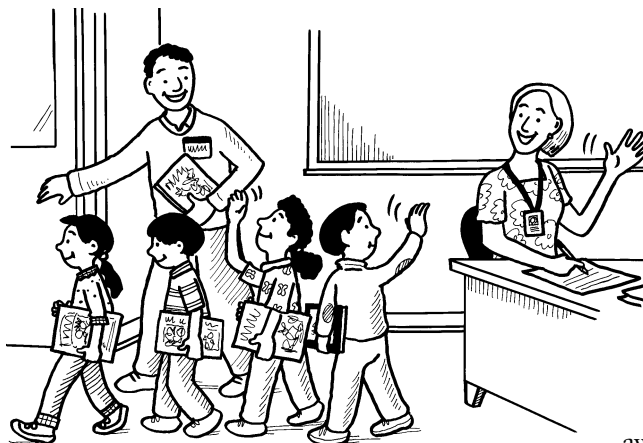
Children whose families take part in their education learn more. Here are ideas for getting everyone involved in your youngster's school.

## 1. At school

Ask the teacher for ways family members can participate. She might let you help with arts and crafts or take a small group to the library. You can also invite relatives to attend school events like a grandparents' breakfast or field day.

## 2. At home

Let your child's teacher know if you're available to help from home. She could ask you to collect egg cartons for an



upcoming project or to cut out words to make flash cards, for example. Your youngster can help, too—she might count egg cartons or put the flash cards in an envelope to take back to school.

## 3. From a distance

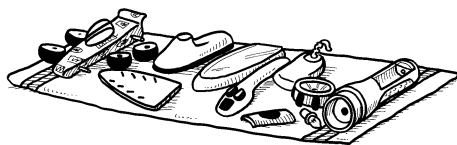
No matter how far away relatives live, they can still be involved. Suggest that your youngster and her cousins take turns mailing things to each other for show-and-tell. For instance, they might send family photos or natural items that are found where they live (seashells, pinecones).♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER Fix-it center

Do you have broken toys or electronics lying around the house? They're not useless! Your youngster can use them to explore how things go together and to build problem-solving skills.

First, gather old phones, flashlights, toys, and appliances (toaster, iron) that don't work. Place them in a plastic bin so parts won't get lost. *Note:* Remove batteries and sharp pieces ahead of time.



Then, encourage your child to put items on a blanket or towel and take them apart. He might remove the cover and memory card from a cell phone. Or he could take the wheels off of a remote-control car. What does he think each part is for? Can he put the object back together?♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
www.rfeonline.com  
ISSN 1540-5567

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Learning on the go

Between driving my children to school, taking my daughter to music lessons, and running errands, it sometimes feels like my son Jayden and I never leave our car. To keep him entertained, I decided to make a "carpool box" to take with us.

Jayden and I filled a cardboard box with things to do: stickers and beads to sort and count, pipe cleaners to bend into animals and shapes, and magnetic letters to spell words. We swap a few items every week to keep the carpool box new and interesting.

Now while I drive, I talk to Jayden about what he's doing. I'll ask him to make a square with a pipe cleaner or spell *stop* with his letters. He's happier in the car, and I feel good because I know that he's learning while he's having fun.♥



## Q & A Let's play school!

**Q:** *This is my daughter's first year in school, and she's trying to get used to being in a class full of kids. How can I help?*

**A:** Youngsters learn through experience how to behave in groups. When you play with your child, try acting out different situations that she might face.

Ask her to get several dolls or stuffed animals and pretend they're at school. Together, have them

take turns and follow classroom rules. You might say, "The bear has all the blue crayons, but the bunny needs to color her sky. What should the bunny do?" ("The bunny could ask, 'May I use a blue crayon, please?'"") You can also give her real-life practice by taking her to parks and playgrounds to play with other children.

Practicing these situations will help your daughter get along with her classmates—and it will boost her confidence, too.♥

