

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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

KID BITS

Special delivery

Encourage your child to work on counting with this idea. Ask him to use a toy truck or basket to deliver a specific number of toys to you. You might say, "I need a delivery! Can you bring me five dinosaurs?" Let him count the toys as he unloads them for you.

"Nervous" habits

Thumb sucking, nail biting, and pencil chewing are all common at this age. You might notice these habits when your youngster is anxious, tired, or bored. Try to distract her—have her tell you what she's thinking about, or help her find something to play with. Calling attention to the habit may just make her more likely to do it.

Party etiquette

When your child wants to invite friends to a special event like a birthday party, talk to him about manners. Have him mail or hand-deliver invitations to his friends' houses rather than passing them out at school. That way he won't hurt the feelings of children he isn't inviting.

Worth quoting

"The most beautiful world is always entered through the imagination."

Helen Keller

Just for fun

Q: How do you greet a three-headed monster?

A: Hello!
Hello! Hello!



Skills for life

As your youngster strives to become a "big kid," she'll need lots of experience with practical skills like doing chores, getting dressed, and using the telephone. These ideas can make practice fun and rewarding for both of you.

Practice with make-believe.

It's hard for your child to learn something new if she's rushed. And when you're in a hurry, it's often faster and easier to pour your youngster's milk or fasten her jacket for her. Instead, work on self-help skills during more relaxed times. She can host a tea party to practice using utensils and pouring drinks. Or have a pretend fashion show to work on zipping, snapping, and buttoning.

Use real experience. Let her be your helper as you go through your daily routine. Many household tasks, such as folding towels and washcloths, making beds, and watering plants, can develop



and strengthen her motor skills. Add more challenging jobs as she masters easier ones. She may surprise you with how much she's capable of!

Find opportunities. It takes only a few minutes to practice some everyday skills. Let your child dial the number when you're calling her grandparents, and teach her to leave a message if they don't answer. As you bring in the mail, look at each piece together to make sure the address matches your house. At snack time, use magnetic letters to spell out each other's full names. ♥

Outdoor learning

Combine outdoor fun with educational activities to create a learning playground for your child. Here's how:

- Write simple words (*pop, cat, ball*) with chalk in random spots on the sidewalk. Your youngster can use them as destinations when he rides his bike ("Ride to the word *love*").

- Let him jump rope as he recites the alphabet. Together, say a letter every time he jumps ("A, B, C"). An older child could call out a word that starts with each letter ("Apple, bark, color").

- While he swings at the park, take turns naming things that fit into a category (say, vegetables). For example, you might say "carrots" when he swings forward, and he could say "broccoli" as he swings back. Choose a new category when you get stuck. ♥

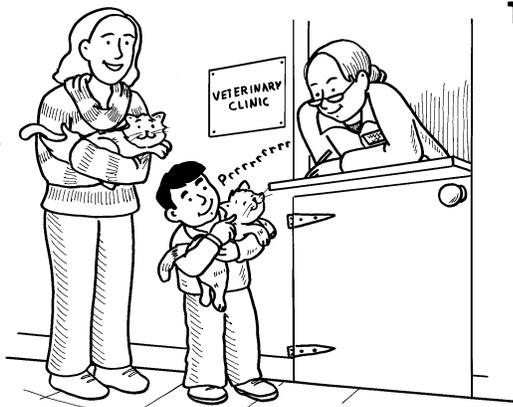


Let's find out!

Does your child ask a lot of questions? You can help him learn early research skills—and discover new things together—with the following suggestions.

Read nonfiction books

Help him keep a list of his questions. Then, take the list to the library, and look for nonfiction picture books that can answer them. If he wonders what clouds are made of, you might help him type “clouds” into the database and read some of the books listed. Let him check off each question as he finds the answer.



Talk to experts

Encourage your youngster to think of a person who might be able to answer his question. For example, if he's curious about why his cat purrs, he could ask your veterinarian.

Go online

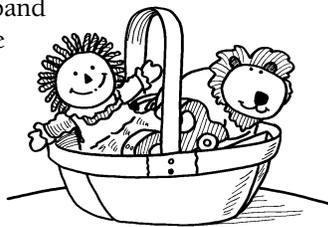
Together, use a kid-friendly search engine like *kidrex.org* or *askkids.com* to find answers online. Help your child type in his question (“Who invented Velcro?”), and then click on a few of the sites that come up to look for the information.

Tip: If you think an answer might be wrong, check another source. (“I think the Tyrannosaurus rex was bigger than this website says. Let's look it up in the encyclopedia.”) It's never too early to teach your youngster to double-check facts.♥

PARENT TO PARENT Free time for play

Between art classes, T-ball, school, and day care, I realized that my daughter Brianna wasn't getting time to just play like I did when I was her age.

My husband said that he had been thinking the same thing. So when our daughter's art class ended, we didn't sign her up for the next session. Instead of feeling like we had to find an activity for her every day of the week, we started making an effort to set aside free time.



Now we make sure she has some playtime before or after dinner each night. On weekends, we leave free time in each afternoon, too. Since we started doing this, we've noticed Brianna being creative and using her imagination more. For instance, she uses her dolls to act out events that happen in school and takes pretend trips to her grandparents' house.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Fun with yarn

Yarn is not only something to knit with—it's also something your youngster can use for math and science fun. Try these three activities.

1. Let her arrange pieces of yarn to make the outline of a shape like a square or triangle. Or she can squeeze glue on paper to make a shape and then press yarn onto the glue.
2. Have your child use yarn to measure household objects. Help her cut a piece of yarn the same length as her foot. Then, ask her to estimate how many of her “feet” a chair or a lamp is. She can use the yarn to check her estimates.
3. Make “waves” with a 6-ft. length of yarn. You can each take one end and stand facing each other so the yarn has a little slack. Then, wave your end up and down. Your child will see how the motion creates a “wave”—it sends energy from your end of the yarn to hers. Next, let her create a wave starting at her end.♥



Q & A Interrupting others

Q: My son often interrupts when people are talking. How can I teach him to wait his turn? someone and will listen to him when you finish.

A: It's common for little ones to interrupt. But waiting his turn to talk is one way your son can show respect for others. You can help him learn by setting an example and by offering gentle reminders when he forgets.

Try to react the same way each time he interrupts. You might hold up a finger to signal that you're talking to



When he does remember not to interrupt, point it out. You might say, “I notice that you waited for me to finish talking.” Then, give him your full attention—and avoid letting others interrupt you while you listen to what *he* has to say. You'll show him what respectful behavior looks like, and he'll learn that what he has to say 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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