

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Arroyo Grande United Methodist Children's Center  
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## KID BITS



### A world of colors

Use this activity to help your child recognize all kinds of colors (tan, violet, silver). Each morning, let her pick a "color of the day" by pulling a random crayon from a box and reading its name. Throughout the day, family members can look for objects of that color.

### Touch base

Consider getting in touch with your youngster's teacher before the school year ends. Call, email, or meet to find out what your child is doing well and if anything seems difficult for him. Ask for ways you can help at home, such as spending more time reading together.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Approximately 5,000 children fall out of windows each year. To help your youngster stay safe, don't leave her alone around open windows, and keep in mind that screens won't prevent falls. Move beds and other furniture away from windows. Also, keep windows locked, or install window guards so your child can't open them herself.

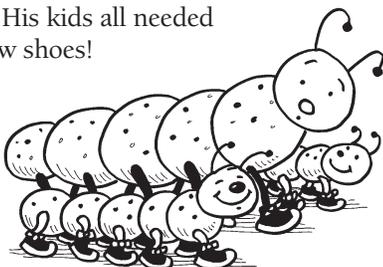
### Worth quoting

"If you have a garden and a library, you have everything you need."  
Marcus Tullius Cicero

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why was the centipede upset?

**A:** His kids all needed new shoes!



## Play and learn

Playing in the sandbox, blowing bubbles, finger painting... these favorite childhood pastimes are more than just fun. They also teach your youngster skills he can use in school.

Here are suggestions for helping your child learn while he plays.



### Sand

Fill a large plastic bin with sand (or use rice or beans). Add kitchen items such as measuring cups and spoons, bowls, strainers, and sifters. Encourage your child to scoop and pour the sand from one container to another. As he plays, use math words. ("Which cup holds *more* sand? Which holds *less*?") He will practice comparing quantities.

### Bubbles

Your little one can make his own bubble solution and use it for science experiments. In a bowl, help him mix  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup water,  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup liquid soap, 2 tsp. glycerin (found in pharmacies), and 1 tsp. sugar.

Then, let him gather household objects that have holes (a straw, a slotted spoon). Your youngster can dip each tool in the solution and blow on it. Ask him to predict which one will make the biggest bubbles. Which bubbles will last the longest?

### Finger paint

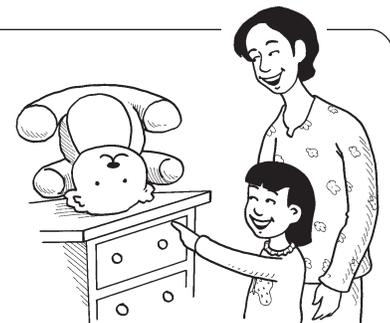
When your child finger-paints, encourage him to practice handwriting. He can write the alphabet, or you could take turns writing messages to each other. He might even like to create a finger-paint alphabet book. Have him make a different letter on each sheet of paper and paint a picture to go with that letter (anteater for A, butterfly for B).♥

## Laughing out loud

Most children love telling and hearing jokes. You can use these tips to laugh along with your youngster:

- Riddles and knock-knock jokes are more fun if your child understands double meanings. Together, think of words that sound alike but have different meanings (let us, lettuce) and use them to make up jokes. ("Knock-knock. Who's there? Lettuce. Lettuce who? Let us in!")

- Youngsters think it's funny when a joke includes something unexpected (a snowman at the beach, a barking cat). Take turns covering your eyes while the other person makes a silly change to a room. You might turn a stuffed animal upside down or hang a sock on a doorknob. Open your eyes and try to spot the "joke."♥



# Confidence boosters

Little ones depend upon loving adults to help them develop confidence. Give your child a healthy dose of self-esteem with these ideas.

**Notice accomplishments.** When your youngster does something well, praise her. Be as specific as possible. For example, instead of, “Good job!” you



might say, “You got the tune just right.” Also, recognize effort (“You’ve learned almost all the words”). Let your child hear you praise her to others.

**Be encouraging.** Take your child’s disappointment seriously—even if it seems minor to you—and help her come up with solutions. Say she’s crying because she can’t do a cartwheel.

You can give her a hug and say something like, “You almost did it. Practice a few more times, and I bet you’ll nail it.”

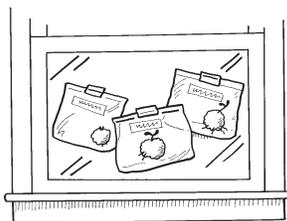
**Focus on strengths.** Give your youngster opportunities to shine. If she does well with crafts, suggest that she make a bracelet for her grandmother or help you with a stenciling project. If she’s good at organizing, let her rearrange her playroom or the pantry.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Seed race

Which plant will sprout first? With this activity, your child can see how plants grow from seeds and find out which one wins the “race.”

First, help your youngster pick out three kinds of seeds at a garden center. (Lima beans, radishes, and cucumbers work well because they grow quickly.) At home, let him sprinkle three cotton balls with water and wedge several seeds into each one (one kind per cotton ball). Then, have him



put the cotton balls in separate small zipper bags. Help him label the bags and tape them to a window.

Ask your child to predict which seed will be the first to sprout. Remind him to check his seeds each day. Within a week, he will see what happens to seeds: roots grow down and sprouts grow up.

*Idea:* After the seeds sprout, he can transfer them to a paper cup or pot of soil.♥



## Symbols are everywhere!

Your child comes across symbols every day, such as mascots, logos, and flags. Help him learn how symbols stand for people, places, or things with these activities:

- Go for a walk to search for symbols. Your youngster might find an American flag and your state flag flying above the post office, a “children playing” symbol on a street sign, and a logo on a store or restaurant. Talk about what each one represents. When you get home, have him draw and label a few of the symbols.
- It can be fun for your child to invent his own symbols. What can he think of that needs a symbol? He might create a mascot for his T-ball team (shark, parrot). Or he could make a family symbol to use on return-address labels.♥



## Q & A Following through with chores

**Q:** We’ve tried assigning chores to our daughter, but it seems like more trouble than it’s worth to get her to do them. How can we come up with a plan we can stay with?

**A:** Try setting up a system that helps your daughter remember to do her chores without being asked. Although it may take time and effort at first, in the long run you’ll have less housework and a more responsible child!

Have her write each chore on a craft stick and put the sticks in

a “job jar.” Each day, let her pull out two or three sticks and lay them on the counter. When she finishes a job, she gets to put that stick back in the jar.

Or help her make a chore chart. She can write the days of the week across the top of a sheet of paper. Down the left side, list her chores (clear table, put away toys). As she completes each job, she can put a sticker next to it.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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