

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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St. James Child Development Center

Ms. Dayna Coleman, Director

KID BITS

Stay in touch

Reach out to your child's teacher whenever you have a question or concern—no need to wait for parent-teacher conferences. You could email to let her know about any changes in your youngster's life, such as a new sibling. She'll be happy to hear from you, and the information can help her help your child.

My library card

Using a library card teaches your youngster to take responsibility for books. Visit the library to get her a card and check out books. Then, consider celebrating with a reading picnic in the park. At home, help her write the books' due date on the calendar so she remembers to return them with you.

DID YOU KNOW?

The visual skills your child needs for school success are still developing. You can help by offering activities that let him follow moving objects with his eyes, sharpen his eye-hand coordination, and improve his depth perception. *Examples:* Play catch, read hidden-picture books, build with blocks, color.

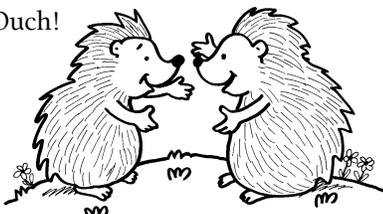
Worth quoting

"It is books that are the key to the wide world." *Jane Hamilton*

Just for fun

Q: What did one hedgehog say to the other after they hugged?

A: Ouch!



Supporting your little student

Whether your child is starting school for the first time or beginning a new year, your involvement will help her do her best. Try these ideas.

My school

Encourage your youngster to draw a map of her school so she can show you where she spends her days. Together, label her favorite spots (music corner, science lab, playground). Then, let her tell you about what she does in each place. You might ask, "Which musical instrument is your favorite?" or "What do you like to play at recess?"

My learning

Have your child share with you what she's learning in school, and do related activities at home. For example, if she's studying community helpers, you could visit a fire station or set up a pretend post office where family members "mail" cards to each other. Or if the class is



learning about apples, perhaps you'll go apple picking or bake an apple pie.

My work

Find special ways to save your youngster's schoolwork. You might let her decorate a binder or box and write "2019–2020" on it. She can put her favorite papers and projects inside. Every so often, look through it with her. You'll both have a reminder of her accomplishments.♥

Routines to count on

Life with little ones goes more smoothly when everyone knows what to expect. Consider these tips for setting up predictable daily routines.

● **Mornings.** Create a goodbye ritual that your child can count on. For instance, you might sing a favorite song together on the walk or car ride to school.

● **Evenings.** As part of dinner cleanup, help your youngster pack tomorrow's snack and set out breakfast supplies (cereal box, spoon, bowl). Also, look through his backpack with him to make sure he has everything he'll need for school the next day.♥



How to make friends

Your youngster's earliest friendships build social skills he'll use throughout life. Here's advice to help him get along with classmates and make new friends.

Friendly introductions. Encourage your child to introduce himself to new classmates. He might say his name, ask a question, and share something about himself. ("Hi, I'm Adam. What's your favorite color? Mine's blue.")



Role-play at home so he's more comfortable starting conversations.

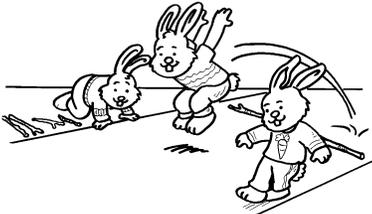
Shared activities. Suggest ways your youngster can ask to play with others. For example, he could take a toy dump truck to a group of kids playing with construction vehicles and say, "Can this truck help out?" And if he is playing with a group of kids,

he might warmly invite a classmate to participate by asking, "Would you like to play with us?"

Playdates. Have your child tell you the names of classmates he'd like to get together with. Then, call their parents to set up a playdate at your home or the park. Help your youngster think of ways to make the visit more pleasant—perhaps by setting out or taking along toys his friend might enjoy.♥

PARENT TO PARENT Jump and measure

A family jumping contest is an active way for your child to practice measuring. Follow these three steps.



- 1. Jump.** Mark a starting line. Each player stands behind the line, jumps forward as far as possible, and marks her landing point.
- 2. Measure.** After each turn, have your youngster measure how far the person jumped. She can use her own feet as a unit of measurement by walking heel-to-toe in a straight line between sticks. Let her write the correct number of "feet" next to each player's name on a sheet of paper.
- 3. Compare.** Ask her questions about the results. "How many 'feet' was the longest jump?" (9) "The shortest?" (4) Help her find the difference between the longest and shortest jumps (9 - 4 = 5 "feet"). *Tip:* Play a few more times to give family members a chance to beat their distances.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Alphabet rocks

This rockin' activity builds your youngster's alphabet skills as she writes letters on rocks and matches them with objects.

Write

Ask your child to gather five rocks outside and use chalk to write a different letter on each one. Together, say the sound of each letter as she writes it.

Play

Can your youngster match each rock with an item that starts with its letter? For instance, she could place a *t* rock under a tree, a *b* rock on a picnic blanket, and a *p* rock on a plate. Now have your child wipe the chalk off the rocks. She can write five new letters and play again!♥



Q & A Learning self-control

Q: My son sometimes acts without thinking about the consequences of his behavior. How can I help him develop more self-control?

A: It's common for children this age to be impulsive. As your son gets older, he will gain more control over his behavior. In the meantime, there are strategies that can make a difference.

First, ask your child questions rather than telling him what to do. For instance, if he puts a candy bar in the shopping cart without permission, ask, "What should you have done instead?" Coming up

with the answer on his own ("I should have asked you") will teach him to stop and think.

You could also create a special signal to use when he's acting impulsively (say, throwing a ball in the house). Maybe you'll put your index finger to your temple. That's his cue to think about his behavior.

As your son's self-control improves, you're likely to find yourself asking fewer questions and using the signal less often.♥



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
 800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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