

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2015

Lexington School District One



## KID BITS

### A promise is a promise

Help your child learn the difference between a promise and a possibility. Explain that promises are meant to be kept. “I *promise* to take a walk with you.” Possibilities are things that may or may not happen. “We will *try* to go swimming tomorrow.”

### Tag the shadow

You'll need plenty of sunshine for this version of tag. One person is “It” and chases the other players. To get a player out, It has to tag a player's shadow with his foot. Players will need to twist and turn to keep their shadows from being tagged. The last person tagged is the next It.

### DIY audio books

Record yourself reading storybooks for your little one. Be sure to include a signal (ring a bell or say “beep”) that tells your youngster when to turn the page. Then, he can listen to your recordings and follow along in the books. He'll work on listening and reading skills—even when you're not together.

### Worth quoting

“Always help someone. You might be the only one who does.” *Anonymous*

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why do bananas use sunscreen?

**A:** Because they peel.



## Daily dose of knowledge

This summer, weave learning into your child's days to keep his brain active and build skills for next year. Here are suggestions.

### Blueprints

Using sidewalk chalk outside, your youngster could draw a floor plan for a house. He'll need to use critical thinking to decide which rooms to include, how to arrange the layout, and where to put doors and windows.

Plus, he'll practice geometry as he figures out the shape and size of each room. When he finishes, have him gather toy people and other props for pretend play in his “house.”

### Toy tales

Build early writing skills by letting your child take a favorite toy and a camera along when you go out. He can snap a photo of the toy's “adventure” at each stop. Afterward, have him put the pictures in order and write or dictate a story. For instance, a tale about his action figure's



day might start, “Today, I took a trip to Foodland and climbed all the way to the top of Mount Watermelon!”

### Math picnic

Turn mealtime into a math-filled picnic. As you prepare the food, ask your youngster to count servings into containers. For example, he could pack 10 grapes, 3 celery sticks, and 1 sandwich for each person. Then, head to a park or spread a blanket for an indoor picnic, and put him in charge of counting out plates, cups, and napkins for everyone.♥

## Extra-special rituals

Summer vacation comes with its share of perks. Take advantage of these “extras” to make memories with your youngster.

● **Extra daylight.** Take walks or bike rides after dinner. Watch the sunset together, and notice how the stars gradually appear brighter.

● **Extra car time.** Turn off the radio and sing songs in the car. Your child could even make up her own words or verses—“Down by the Bay” might become “Down by the Zoo.”

● **Extra people.** Encourage your youngster to develop her own traditions with visiting relatives. Maybe she and her grandfather will play checkers together, or she'll make delicious ice cream with her aunt.♥



# Summer socializing

Children who enjoy the company of other kids are more comfortable in the classroom. Your child can make or maintain friendships and build social skills with these ideas.

**Join the crowd.** Go places and attend events where there are other youngsters. Try playgrounds, library story hours, and nature center programs. While you're there, encourage your youngster to say hi and introduce herself. She'll practice interacting with kids—and she may find a new friend. *Tip:* Check calendars at your parks department and community centers, and let your child pick a few activities.



**Plan play dates.** Help your child call friends and invite them over to play. Before guests arrive, have her think of things to do. Then, she can suggest options like playing catch

or painting with watercolors, and they can decide together. Remind her to make guests feel welcome in your home by letting them go first during games and activities.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Rub-a-dub scrub

Looking for an interesting teacher gift to make with your child? This good-smelling hand scrub is sure to be a hit. Plus, your youngster will get practice with following directions, measuring, and writing. Follow these steps.

1. Have your child measure  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sugar and  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup coconut oil into a bowl and mix them together.



2. Let him add color and scent by stirring in powdered drink mix until he likes the color (up to 1 envelope).
3. He should scoop the scrub into a clean, empty jar and screw on the lid.
4. Now, help your youngster write a gift tag. On one side, he can put "To" and "From" and add the teacher's name and his name. On the other, he could write "Sugar scrub" and instructions. ("Rub scrub on hands. Rinse with warm water.")♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Checking in with the teacher

My older sister mentioned that a good way to prepare your child for the next school year is to ask this year's teacher what to work on over the summer. I thought that was a good idea, especially since my son starts kindergarten this fall. So I asked his preschool teacher for advice at our spring parent-teacher conference.



Miss Benson said that kids are expected to do more for themselves in kindergarten. She pointed out that Luis often asks for help with things he can do himself. I realized he does this at home, too. She suggested that I say, "Show me how much you can do," when he asks me to put together his jigsaw puzzle or tie his shoes. That will tell him I know he's capable and encourage him to try on his own.

I left the conference with a plan that I hope will help Luis be ready for kindergarten—and be more independent at home.♥

## Q & A Spend, save, give

**Q:** My daughter asks to spend gift and allowance money as soon as she gets it. How can I teach her the importance of good money habits?

**A:** Try this hands-on way for your child to see and manage her money. Let her label three boxes: "Spend," "Save," and "Give."

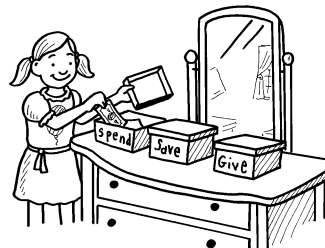
Explain that the money in the first box will be for purchasing things she would like, the second is to save for later, and the last is to use for buying gifts or giving to charity. Then,

help her divide her money among the containers (you might discuss whether she should divide it evenly or put more into the "Save" or "Give" box).

When you shop together, help her think through her spending choices—but let her make the final decision. You could say, "If you buy that

game today, you won't have enough for the basketball you have been wanting."

Let her experience the consequences of her choice. With practice, she'll become more thoughtful about money.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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 ISSN 1540-5567