

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2016

Lexington School District One

KID BITS



School: A family affair

When you can't attend school events with your child, ask another family member to take your place. Grandpa might go on the class trip, for example, or Aunt Claire could participate in field day. Your youngster will see that school is important to her entire family.

Color and chat

Quiet time spent coloring with your child allows both of you to relax and connect with each other. It's also a great way to encourage conversation. Use the time for freewheeling discussions about what you're coloring, what you did today, or anything he wants to chat about.

First aid kit

Help your youngster make a portable first aid kit for the car. Let her decorate a large zipper bag with stickers and label it "First Aid." Have her fill the bag with bandages, antibiotic cream, and wipes for cleaning scrapes. Keep the kit in the trunk or glove compartment, and replace items as necessary.

Worth quoting

"The best way to have a good idea is to have lots of ideas." *Linus Pauling*

Just for fun

Q: What is tall in the morning, short at noon, and gone at night?

A: A shadow.



Five-senses learning

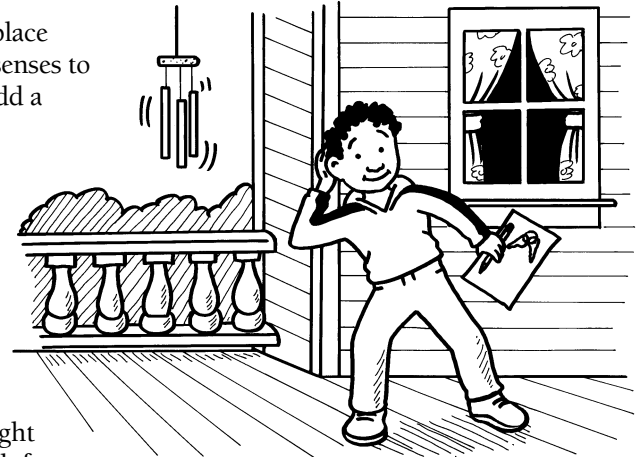
A lot of learning takes place when your child uses his senses to investigate and explore. Add a sensory boost to his play with these activities.

Sense-ational snacks

Letting your youngster experiment with food engages his senses of sight, touch, smell, and taste. At snack time, allow him to play with his food (with clean hands). He might use his hands to mix dough for biscuits and form it into letters, numbers, or shapes. Or put different foods like grape halves or cheese cubes into a muffin tin. With eyes closed, he could smell and taste each one and try to guess what it is.

World in a box

Help your child fill a plastic container with 8 cups flour mixed with 1 cup baby oil to make "cloud dough." He can add small items of various textures and colors to the box (wood blocks, plastic animals, pinecones) and create a pretend



world. Have him tell you stories about what he sees as he plays.

Noisy books

Ask your youngster to think of a sound he hears every day, such as keys jingling or an alarm clock ringing. He could draw a picture of it on a sheet of paper and go on a "noise hunt" for three things that make a similar sound. As your youngster finds each one, he can draw a picture of it on his sheet. When he's found all three, think of a new noise to hunt. After he makes a few sheets, staple them together into a book.♥

April showers bring fun

Pediatricians recommend that children get at least one hour of physical play each day—and more is even better. Plan active rainy days with these ideas for outdoors and indoors.

Outside

- Make up rain dances. Teach your moves to each other.
- Put on boots and take turns jumping over puddles—or stomping in them.
- Pretend small sticks are boats. Standing on grass or



a sidewalk, float them in the gutter and follow them downstream to see where they go.

Inside

- Ride tricycles in the garage or basement.
- Use masking tape to make a hopscotch grid on the kitchen floor, and play a few rounds.
- Go to a recreation center for indoor play during open gym time.♥

Respect begins early

What does respect look like? From an early age, your little one can learn how to show respect for others—with your gentle guidance. Here are two suggestions.

Look for it. When reading a book or watching a show together, make a game of finding characters treating each other respectfully. Your child may notice a character saying please and thank you. Or an angry character might still use a calm voice to speak nicely. Let your youngster make a tally mark on paper for each respectful act the two of you notice. At the end of the story or show, count to see how many you found.



Pass it on. Children love to teach others something they know. First, remind your child of the behavior you expect, like sitting quietly and not kicking the seat in front of her at her brother's orchestra recital. Then, let her “teach” that type of

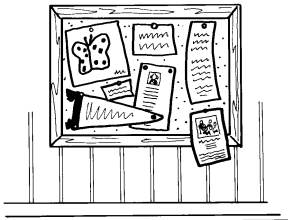
respect to a doll that will accompany her to the event. She'll be more likely to remember what to do if she's setting an “example” for her doll.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Pin it! Make a family bulletin board

I'm a big fan of Pinterest, and when I found a large bulletin board at a yard sale, I decided to make a real-life board for my family.

I hung the board in a hallway and invited everyone to post interesting things. My



son Liam hung up a butterfly picture he drew. I added a couple of knock-knock jokes I thought Liam would like, and my husband “pinned” a quote by his favorite author.

Throughout the week, we added more items—and took time to read what others posted. Now every Saturday we clear off the board to make room for new things to share. Liam loves checking out all the fun things we “pin.” And I love that we started a family activity that also encourages my son's interest in reading.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Over, under, and through

The playground is packed with things for your child to climb *on*, wiggle *under*, and crawl *through*. Try this idea to burn off energy and work on spatial reasoning skills.

Materials: a die, masking tape, marker, small box

Cover the faces of the die with masking tape, and print a positional word on each side: *up*, *down*, *beside*, *over*, *under*, and *through*.

At the park, let your youngster roll the die in the box. Then, he chooses a place to act out the word, and you guess the word he rolled. For example, if he rolled *under*, he might crawl beneath the jungle gym. When you correctly guess the action (“You're crawling *under* the jungle gym”), you roll and act out one for him. Take turns until you've used all the words—and you're all tired out!♥



Q & A

Wanted: A longer attention span

Q: Our daughter often bounces from activity to activity. What can we do to build her attention span so she sticks with things a little longer?

A: Your child's attention span will naturally increase as she gets older. In the meantime, doing things to practice will stretch her ability to focus.

Goal-oriented activities that require concentration, like completing a dot-to-dot picture or making a caterpillar from pom-poms, can help. Her interest in completing the project may motivate her to stay focused.

Also, consider the size of a task you want your youngster to tackle. Big projects may overwhelm her and cause her to lose focus. Try breaking jobs into smaller chunks. Rather than saying, “Clean your room,” ask her to put away her books. When she finishes, suggest the next chunk to work on.

Remember that little ones are easily distracted. Your child will find it easier to pay attention to an activity if you turn off the TV and put away other toys before she works on a puzzle, for example.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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