

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2005

## KID BITS



### Shapes on the go

What's an easy way to help your child practice shapes? Look for traffic signs! Take along some paper and crayons on your next car ride. Have your youngster draw the signs he sees. Then, help him count how many of each shape (circle, square, triangle) he found.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Parent involvement in your child's education is an important factor in her success. Just asking your youngster about what she's learning can improve her performance. And research shows that the earlier that parents get involved, the more successful a child can be!

### Random acts of kindness

Motivate your youngster with a "kindness tree." Cut a tree out of brown paper. Then, cut out leaves of various colors. Each time your child does something kind, such as sharing without being asked, write her good deed on a leaf and tape it to the tree.

### Worth quoting

"Keep your face to the sunshine, and you cannot see the shadow."

*Helen Keller*

### Just for fun

**Teacher:** If I had seven oranges in one hand and eight oranges in the other hand, what would I have?

**Child:** Really big hands!



## Raising a "smooth" talker

When asked what he did at school today, Charlie replied, "I 'eated' a snack and 'goed' to recess." Charlie's language is typical for his age. He is learning grammar rules (such as adding "ed" to show that something already happened), but he sometimes uses them incorrectly.

Most children correct their language mistakes over time. But since good language skills can give your youngster a head start as he learns to read, it can't hurt to help him along. Try the following suggestions.

### Improve word use

Children often mispronounce and misuse words, such as "psghetti" (spaghetti), and "feets" (feet). Try repeating what your youngster says but in the correct way. If he says, "I brushed my 'teeths,'" you might say, "I brushed my 'teeth,' too."

### Boost vocabulary

Point out unfamiliar words while reading to your child. For instance, if she comes across the word "thrilled," explain that it means "very happy." And when you're reading, let your youngster see you look up words you don't know in a dictionary. She'll learn that building vocabulary is a lifelong process.

### Sharpen conversation skills

Give your child plenty of language practice by talking with



him as often as possible. Encourage him to expand on short answers. *Example:* If you ask your youngster what he ate for lunch and he says, "A sandwich," ask, "What kind of sandwich?" and "Which friend did you eat lunch with today?" ♥

## Safe at home

Is your home childproof? Even though your youngster isn't a baby anymore, safety is still important. Consider this checklist:

- ☑ Are medications out of reach? Iron is poisonous in large doses, so make sure vitamins are locked up, too.
- ☑ Do you own a smoke detector, fire extinguisher, and carbon monoxide detector? Contact your local fire department for information on what kinds to get and how many of each you should have in your home.
- ☑ Are cleaning supplies, chemicals, and inhalants put away? These may include items you don't normally think of as dangerous, such as hair spray and nail polish remover. ♥

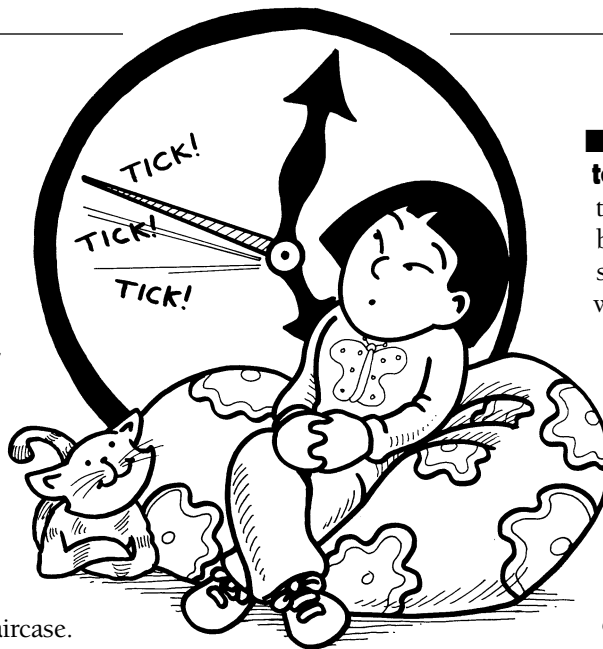


# Time-out tips

Have you ever given your youngster a time-out? If used appropriately, time-outs can help your child learn self-control. Here's how to get the most from this discipline method.

■ **Choose carefully.** If you give your youngster a time-out for every offense, it won't be as effective. Behaviors deserving time-out might include leaving the yard without permission or deliberately breaking something.

■ **Pick a time-out spot.** You might try the bed in a guest room, a chair in the kitchen, or a certain step on the staircase.



■ **Let your child know what to expect.** Decide what you'll call time-out ("cooling off," "taking a break"), and tell her what she should do during it (think about what she did, sit quietly).

■ **Stay calm.** Try not to yell or lecture. Explain to your youngster what he did wrong, and calmly send him to time-out. When it's over, have him tell you what the time-out was for.

*Tip:* Try one minute of time-out for each year of your child's age. ♥

## Q & A Attendance counts!

**Q:** We're planning a family vacation. Is taking my child out of school for a week a bad idea?

**A:** Even a few days away from school can interrupt your youngster's routine, making it harder for him to adjust when he returns. He will also miss valuable learning time. Try to take vacations during scheduled school breaks. You'll show your child that school is too important to be missed.

If your youngster must miss time because of illness or an emergency, ask his teacher how you can help while he's absent. You may be able to keep his learning on track by doing some extra reading or writing practice with him. ♥

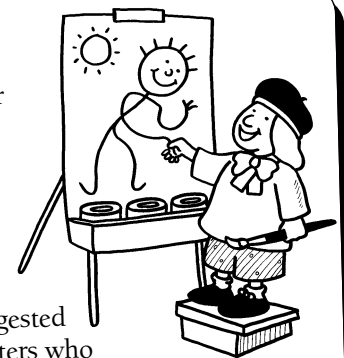


## PARENT TO PARENT Making friends

When school started, my daughter didn't seem to fit in with the other kids. They never made fun of her, but they didn't invite her to play at recess or to attend their parties.

I talked to Julie's teacher. She noticed that my daughter was fairly quiet and seemed to spend a lot of time alone. She said that maybe Julie wasn't sure how to approach the other children. The teacher suggested that she might make friends more easily with youngsters who share her interests.

When I mentioned that Julie loved to draw, her teacher told me about an art class at the community center. After my daughter attended a few classes, she asked if she could invite one of the students to our house. Julie discovered that they go to the same elementary school, and they soon became good friends. Her new friend has also introduced her to several other children from their school. ♥



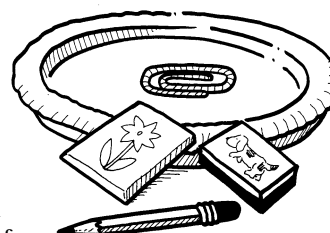
## ACTIVITY CORNER Magnet magic

How can you make a paper clip move without touching it? Try this science activity to build your child's small motor skills. You'll need a refrigerator magnet, paper plate, paper clip, and marker.

Let your youngster use the marker to draw a simple picture, a maze, or some squiggly lines on the plate. Put the paper clip on top of the plate. Hold the paper plate in front of

you with both hands while your child moves the magnet underneath the plate. Can he make the paper clip trace the path he created?

Challenge your youngster to substitute various objects for the paper clip (a staple, a coin, a scrap of paper). Which ones move with the magnet, and which don't? ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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