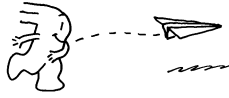


Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2017

Mono County Office of Education
Dr. Stacey Adler, Early Childhood Education Director



KID BITS

(Re)tell me a story

Listening to stories and then retelling them gets your youngster ready to read. After you finish reading her a book, invite your child to tell you the story in her own words. She'll improve her listening comprehension and work on vocabulary and oral language skills as she chooses what to say.

Try new foods

Most children love to try free samples at the grocery store. Why not have a nutritious taste test at home? Cut fruit, vegetables, and cheese into bite-sized pieces, spear them on toothpicks, and offer the "samples" to your little one. He'll enjoy the novelty and could discover new healthy foods he likes.

Volunteer from home

If you work during school hours or are home with a baby, you can still donate your time to help your child's class. Ask the teacher for tasks to do from home, like getting crafts ready or making phone calls to organize class parties. Your youngster will feel good to know that you're a "class helper."

Worth quoting

"How much good inside a day?
Depends how good you live 'em.
How much love inside a friend?
Depends how much you give 'em."
Shel Silverstein

Just for fun

Q: What do snowmen like to do in their free time?

A: Chill out.



Focusing attention

Paying attention is a skill your youngster can develop over time with practice. Try these ideas to give him plenty of opportunities.

Tap interests

Improve your child's concentration by taking advantage of activities he loves. For instance, if he enjoys snapping together tracks for his toy train, suggest a shape or size to make, and let him work on building it.

Join in

Nothing will make your youngster want to stay with an activity quite like having you play, too. Find things to do together that require close attention. You could try concentration-building games like Red Light Green Light and Simon Says. Or pretend to be mimes, and copy each other's moves.

Avoid interruptions

While your child is busy with a task, such as sorting his blocks by color, try not to interrupt him. Allowing him to stay focused will help him build his attention span himself.



Try another

When your little one begins to lose interest in an activity, encourage him to do "one more" before he stops—attempt one more basket, try to balance on his bike one more time, put away one more book. Over time, these small increases will add up.

Note: If you're concerned about your youngster's attention span, talk to his teacher. She can tell you if she has noticed any problems.♥

Ways to feel calm

Your child can cope with emotions like anger, anxiety, and frustration by using these calm-down tricks at home or at school.

- **Bear hug.** Maybe she's feeling overwhelmed. Have her wrap her arms around herself and give a squeeze while she slowly counts to five.
- **Pep talk.** Together, think of a positive message she can repeat to herself when she feels anxious. *Example:* "I've got this."
- **Deep breath.** Anger rising? Ask your youngster to inhale deeply and then slowly and gently blow the biggest imaginary bubble possible.
- **"Noodle bones."** To help her relax, try this funny technique. Get her to close her eyes and pretend that all her bones are wiggly noodles.♥



New year, new expectations

Did you know that working toward a goal helps your child create higher expectations for herself—and meet them? Let her get the new year rolling with these steps.

1. Encourage your youngster to choose a goal to work on, like making a paper airplane or putting away her clean clothes. *Tip:* Have her pick something that is slightly difficult, but not impossible,



for her to do. Unrealistic goals may cause her to lose motivation.

2. While your child is learning, offer to be her assistant. You might do the tiny folds on her airplane after she does the bigger ones, for example. Or just offer to go to the park together for a few practice flights.

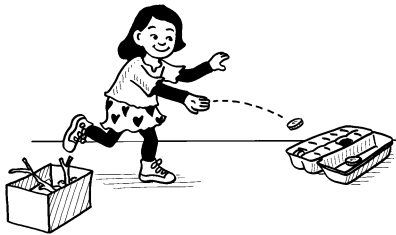
3. Praise your little one's efforts instead of her results. For instance, you could say, "You're working so hard to make those paper airplanes. Nice job!" She'll feel good about trying her hardest.

4. Once she meets the goal, help her pick out a new one to accomplish.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Time to tinker



Sometimes the best toys aren't toys at all. Playing with "loose parts" invites your youngster to use her imagination, to experiment, to reason—and to learn!



First, help your child gather everyday items from indoors and outdoors like bottle caps, ribbons, checkers, paper clips, pinecones, twigs, feathers, leaves, and pipe cleaners. Then, she might:

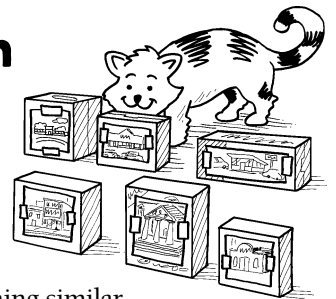
- ✓ Toss paper clips or bottle caps into an egg carton. Count how many of each are in one section.
- ✓ Arrange checkers, twigs, and pipe cleaners to make letters or numbers.
- ✓ Make a pile of pieces with names that start with *p*: pebbles, paper plates, pencils.
- ✓ Design a creature with a pinecone, feathers, ribbons, and leaves.

Have your youngster collect new materials to keep things interesting.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

My own little town

During Grandparents' Day at school, my grandson Jayden showed me the geography project his class made. They created a town by gluing pictures of buildings to empty food boxes and arranging them to make streets and neighborhoods.



Jayden loved the project, so I decided to do something similar with him at my house. He cut out pictures of buildings—a hardware store, a supermarket, a post office—from old magazines and taped them on boxes from my recycling bin. If he couldn't find a certain picture, he drew the building on paper and attached that. Jayden arranged his "buildings" into a town on the kitchen floor, and we drove toy cars up and down the "streets."

Now when we go out, it's a game for Jayden to find new buildings to add, such as a city hall or a police station. He's learning a lot about what makes up a city!♥

Q & A Encouraging honesty

Q: Lately, I've been noticing my son stretching the truth. How can I teach him to be honest?

A: It's not uncommon for young children to be dishonest about things they wish were true or to avoid getting into trouble.

When you find your son telling a tall tale, gently remind him about the importance of being truthful. Maybe you overheard him telling a friend about taking a trip

in a helicopter. Later, you could say, "You know you haven't ridden in a helicopter yet, but someday you might. Until then, let's be honest."

If he lied to get out of trouble, help him come clean by sticking to the facts. "I know you might be afraid to tell me you broke the vase, but it was an accident. Let's clean it up."

A positive approach and focusing on the truth rather than getting angry will teach your child it is safe to be honest.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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