

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2019



KID BITS

Picture this

Encourage your youngster to pay attention to details with this idea. Have her recreate a family photo using her toys. For a picture of a birthday party, she might arrange her dolls around a toy birthday cake. Snap a photo of her creation, and she can compare it with the original picture.

Boo-boo kit

Taking care of stuffed animals lets your child practice empathy and compassion. Help him make a “first aid kit” with bandages, gauze, and wipes. He could use it to tend to the animals’ pretend cuts and scrapes—then hug and comfort them to make them feel better.

Be positive

Instead of correcting your youngster when she gets something wrong, suggest that she try again. You might say, “That word does start with C, but it’s not *cat*. What else could it be?” This approach will make her more likely to keep trying until she gets it right.

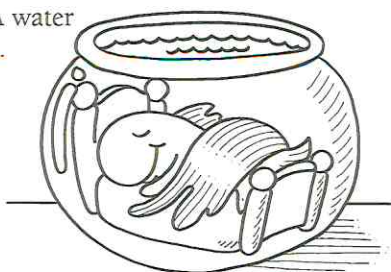
Worth quoting

“The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart.” *Helen Keller*

Just for fun

Q: What kind of bed did the goldfish buy?

A: A water bed.



Learning with summer projects

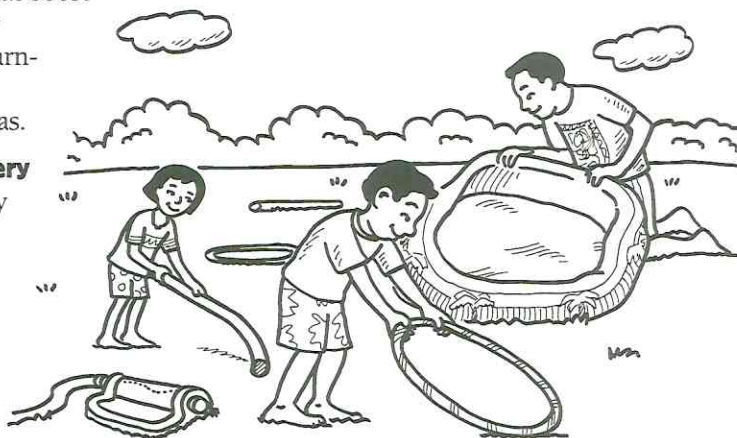
Fun projects that boost creativity are your child’s ticket to learning this summer. Here are a few ideas.

Hallway art gallery

Ask each family member to create a self-portrait by gluing “found” objects on paper. Strips of felt might be eye-brows, and bottle caps could become eyes. Hang your masterpieces to start your own art “gallery.” Then, your youngster can add to it all summer while he experiments with different art supplies (watercolors, chalk).

Family talent shows

Entertain each other, and discover new skills, with weekly household talent shows. Your child might play songs on his toy xylophone or do a stand-up comedy routine with knock-knock jokes. Maybe someone else will put



on a shadow puppet show or juggle. Rehearse your routines, then enjoy watching each other’s performances.

Backyard water park

Let your youngster design a “water park” in the yard. He could arrange pool noodles, jump ropes, or hula hoops to make a path. Turn on the sprinkler, and your family can get exercise by running along the path under the water. He may also include a baby pool for splashing, and a “snack bar” with healthy offerings like fresh fruit and raw vegetables.♥

Celebrate your teacher

As the school year wraps up, your youngster can show appreciation for her teacher with a card or gift. Consider these suggestions.

- **Design a card.** Have your child draw a picture on the cover. Inside, she might write about her favorite memories from the school year.
- **Donate a book.** Your youngster could help her teacher grow the classroom library with a new or gently used book. Suggest that she add an inscription (“Story time with Mr. Frye is the best!”) along with her name and the year.
- **Make a treat.** Let your child help you whip up a homemade treat like muffins or cookies. Together, write a note thanking the teacher for a “sweet” year.♥



Read-aloud success

What's even better than cuddling up with your child and reading a good book? Knowing that you're teaching her the skills she needs to read by herself! Make the most of story time with these steps.

1. Get ready. Choose a book that repeats the same phrase on each page, such as *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Bill Martin Jr.). Read the title and look at the cover together. What does your youngster think the story is about? Making a prediction and having a general idea of the plot will help her understand it better.



2. Enjoy the book. Read the story several times to help your child become familiar with it. When she picks up on the pattern, she can read along with you. After a few readings, pause to let her fill in the words. Being able to read a book, even if it's from memory, will give her confidence.

3. Talk about it. After you close the book, ask your child questions like "Which animal was your favorite?" or "What animal would you add to the

story?" You'll help her connect with the story, which will improve her reading comprehension. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT Outdoor safety

My son Elliot loves to play outside, and I'm glad to see him enjoying physical activity. I decided to create a card game to help him remember safety rules.

First, we made two index cards for each of our rules. On one, Elliot drew someone following the rule. On the other, he drew someone breaking it. For instance, he drew a boy riding a bike wearing a helmet, and one without a helmet.



Elliot mixed up the cards and stacked them facedown. We took turns drawing a card, talking about the rule, and telling whether the person was safe or unsafe.

It's a super simple activity, but it really has helped the rules "stick." And Elliot's the first one to mention adding new cards whenever I teach him a new safety rule. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A Money smarts for little ones

Q: My parents like to give my daughter a dollar here and a quarter there. How can I help her learn about money?

A: Learning the basics now will help your child understand how to manage money when she's older.

Start with imaginary play. For example, take turns pretending to drive a taco truck. Your daughter could make play dough tacos and burritos and set prices. The "customer" pays for them with real coins.

Also, have her save the money from her grandparents in a clear jar so she can watch her savings grow. When there's something she'd like to buy, such as stickers or a toy car, help her research how much it costs. She'll see that it can take time to save for things you want. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER We can build it together!

With this idea, no one knows what kind of block structure you're building until it's finished. And as you build, your youngster will work on flexible thinking and cooperation.

Materials: blocks, two dice

First, have each person secretly imagine what he wants to create, perhaps a castle or a skyscraper. Then, let your child roll the dice

and arrange that number of blocks to start the building. So if he rolls four, he might lay four blocks end to end, stand them side by side, or stack them.

Take turns rolling the dice and adding blocks. The only rule is that you can't move others' blocks.

When all the blocks are used, the result will be different from what anyone had in mind. And your youngster will see how combining ideas makes creating things interesting and fun. ♥

