

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2014

EARLY CHILDHOOD
SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OF ST LOUIS COUNTY

KID BITS



“Can I play?”

Encourage your child to make friends by showing her how to approach classmates. You could pretend to be another student, and your youngster might say, “Can I play vet with you?” Then switch roles so she can practice responding when others want to play with her.

Sizing things up

Take a walk around your neighborhood with your little one, and use objects you see to help her compare sizes. Ask questions like “Is that mailbox *taller* or *shorter* than you?” or “Is the white rock *bigger* or *smaller* than the gray one?”

Quick change

Playground and potty accidents happen. If your child keeps a change of clothes at school or in his bag, be sure to switch them out as the seasons change and as he outgrows them. Also, remember to send in a replacement outfit if he wears the extra clothing home.

Worth quoting

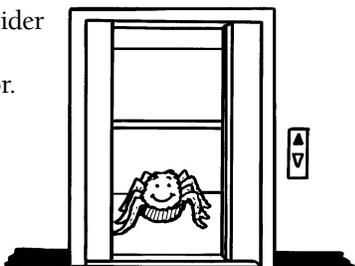
“Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if only you try!”

Dr. Seuss

Just for fun

Q: What has eight legs and goes up and down?

A: A spider in an elevator.



Ready to learn

For young students, success in school starts with being able to take turns, cooperate, and follow directions. Here are ways to build these skills so that your child can start the year off right.

Taking turns

At school, your youngster will need to wait his turn, whether he wants to answer a question or use the water fountain. Together, do fun activities that require turn-taking. Board games and card games are great for this. Or play school, and switch off being the teacher and the student. Also, look for examples of people taking turns. While waiting in line at the bank, you might say, “It’s that man’s turn now. We get to go next.”

Cooperating

Provide plenty of opportunities for your child to use teamwork so he’ll learn to cooperate with other students. If he’s making a tent, for instance, you can each hold one end of a blanket and drape it over chairs. When you bake



cupcakes, it could be his job to put the paper liners in the pan before you pour in the batter.

Following directions

Give your youngster pairs of silly movements to act out. You might say, “Wiggle like a worm, then hop like a bunny,” or “Flap like a bird, then gallop like a pony.” He will practice following two-step directions—just like his teacher will be giving in school. (“It’s time to sit down. Now take out your crayons.”) When he has mastered two steps, move on to three. ♥

Make good attendance a habit

Regular attendance is important for school success as early as preschool—and it creates a habit your youngster can use all her life. Try these ideas:

- Make school the priority. Whenever possible, schedule doctor appointments and family trips for times when school is out.
- Stick to regular bedtimes on school nights. A well-rested child will find it easier to wake up on time.
- Mention school as part of the daily routine so that she naturally expects to go each day. For example, you might say, “On Tuesday after school, we’ll stop at Grandma’s for a visit.” ♥



Organized and involved

Where is that permission slip? What is the teacher's email address again? As the new school year gets under way, consider these tips for staying on top of things.

Create a place for papers. Many parents wonder what to do with all the finished work their youngsters bring home. Here's a thought: Hole-punch pages you and your child want to keep, and put them in a binder. You could organize them by subject or by month.



Tip: Hang your youngster's favorite art projects in a hallway gallery, and store others in a box labeled for this year.

Keep track of events. Staying involved at your child's school is easier when you plan ahead. Mark a calendar with PTO meetings, parent breakfasts, and other functions to attend. Or start an online calendar just for school. Google has a free one that can send you email reminders.

Tip: Add phone numbers and email addresses for the teacher, school, and attendance hotline to your address book or cell phone for handy reference.♥

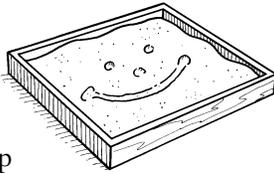
PARENT TO PARENT

The "happy plan"

My son Ian was excited about starting preschool this year, but he wasn't happy about being away from me. He cried when I dropped him off, and I left feeling miserable.

When this continued into his second week, the teacher came up with a "happy plan"—a strategy for starting the day on a good note. She suggested that every morning I remind Ian of things he enjoys at school, like going down the slide or playing at the sand table. She said I might give him a "secret mission" to tell me about later, such as what kind of snack he ate or what book his teacher read aloud.

I tried the teacher's idea the next day. It took a few days, but soon Ian began looking forward to being dropped off. He even started coming up with his own secret missions, like reporting what colors he made by mixing paints. Now we're both a lot happier at drop-off time.♥

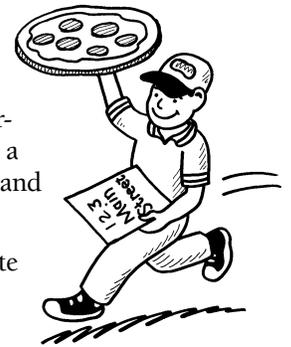


ACTIVITY CORNER

Pizza delivery!

Open a pretend pizza delivery service to teach your child his address and phone number. Use a toy pizza, or have him make one out of construction paper, and enjoy this activity.

1. Let your youngster draw a picture of your house and write his address on it. Next, ask him to draw a phone and print your phone number on it. Together, practice saying the address and phone number.
2. Have him use a toy phone to place a pretend pizza order. He could dial the number and say, "Please deliver a large cheese pizza to 123 Main Street. My phone number is 555-0100." (He may need to look at his drawings the first few times.)
3. Deliver the pretend pizza, and check the address with him. "Is this 123 Main Street? I have one cheese pizza for you."
4. Trade roles, and order a pizza for him to deliver. Play for a few days until he has memorized his address and phone number. You might even let him order a real pizza!♥



Q & A Cut, paste, and play

Q: My daughter is learning to use scissors in school. Are there ways she can practice at home?

A: Sure! Not only will your child need to use scissors for projects and other schoolwork, they're also a good way to build the strength and coordination she needs for handwriting.

Making paper dolls is a fun way to practice. Give her a pair of safety scissors, a stack of old magazines, glue, and plain paper. Then, help her cut out a variety of faces, shirts,

and pants to mix and match. (Make sure she holds the scissors correctly—ask her teacher if you're not sure.)

She can glue each "person" on paper and cut out around the edges to create a paper doll. Later, she might decide to change the dolls' outfits by gluing new ones on top.

Note: Remind her of safety rules, including staying seated when she uses scissors and holding them closed and pointed down while walking.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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