

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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IXL Elementary School

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KID BITS

Sneezes and coughs

Does your youngster know how to sneeze and cough into the crook of his arm? Just turning his head and lifting his elbow isn't enough. Show him how to put his other hand under his elbow and lift the arm to cover his nose and mouth. This strategy will help him avoid spreading germs.

Comparing kids

It's normal for a parent to wonder why a friend's or neighbor's child reads better or gets upset less often than theirs. Keep in mind that youngsters develop at their own pace, and try to focus on what your child does well without comparing her to others. *Note:* If you have concerns about her development, talk to her teacher.

Stay warm at recess

Colder weather means extra layers of clothing so your youngster can run and play comfortably during recess. Have him practice putting on his coat, hat, and gloves at home so he can do it independently at school. Also, label these items so he can tell them apart from his friends' clothes.

Worth quoting

"Do something wonderful, people may imitate it." *Albert Schweitzer*

Just for fun

Q: What starts with a "p," ends with an "e," and has thousands of letters?

A: Post office!



Responsible for me

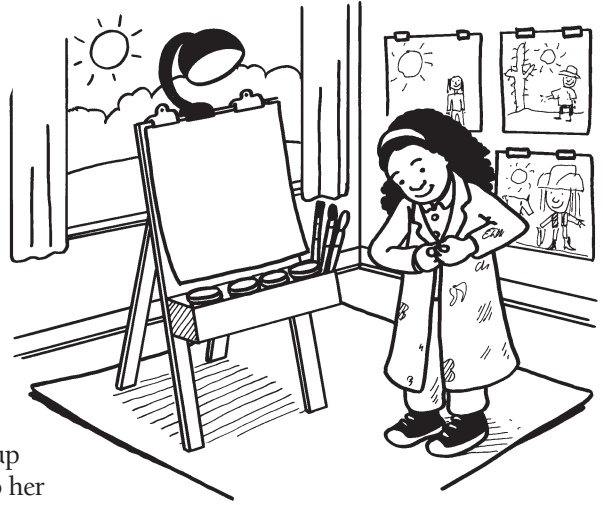
As your child grows, she'll gradually take more and more responsibility for her routines, behavior, and belongings. Try these tips to guide her along the way.

Set expectations

Decide what your youngster should be responsible for. For instance, you might expect her to get up at a certain time on school mornings. But she may not be ready to set an alarm and get up without having you come into her room. Follow her lead—if she takes comfort in seeing you first thing, wait until she's a little older before expecting her to use an alarm clock.

Celebrate successes

When your child shows responsibility, let her know you noticed—and point out the benefit. *Example:* "You found your missing train when you tidied up your room. Now you can play with it." She'll see that responsible behavior has its own rewards, motivating her to repeat it.



Use mistakes as opportunities

Let your youngster learn from mistakes when possible. She'll discover that mistakes are okay and that she's in charge of correcting them. For instance, if she gets paint on her favorite shirt, teach her how to wash it. Then, help her think of ways to keep nice clothes clean when she paints. She might suggest setting aside old clothes to wear for painting or ask to use one of your old shirts as a smock. ♥

Staying focused

Boost your youngster's attention span with these activities that encourage him to focus.

● **Hot and cold.** Hide a toy for your child to find. As he searches, let him know when he's close to it ("Hot!") or far away ("Cold!"). He'll want to stay focused on your words until he locates the toy.

● **Claps and stomps.** How many motions can your youngster copy? Ask him to pay close attention while you do just one (clap), and have him repeat after you. Then add another (clap, stomp) for him to copy. Keep going until he forgets one. ♥



Wonderful words

All the words your youngster learns are stepping-stones on his path toward becoming a successful reader and writer. Use these ideas to grow his vocabulary.

Read books. Each time you read to your child, encourage him to listen for at least one unfamiliar word that he'd like to start using (say, *stupendous*). Look it up in the dictionary together to discover that it means *awesome* or *wonderful*. Now find ways to weave it into



your next conversation. At sunset, you might say, “The sky looks *stupendous* with all those colors.” Or perhaps your youngster will say, “Today was a *stupendous* day because I got to play the tambourine in music class at school.”

Match synonyms. Synonyms are words with similar meanings, like *pop* and *burst*. Help your child cut two different-color sheets of paper into 12 squares each. On each square of one color, write words your child knows (*shirt*, *cat*). Then, write a synonym (*blouse*, *feline*) for

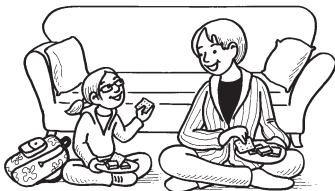
each word on each square of the opposite color. Together, match up the pairs of synonyms, giving your youngster clues to help him learn the words. (“A *feline* is an animal you might have as a pet.”)♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Tell me what you learned today

Whenever my daughter Leah walked in the door from school, I'd immediately ask her what she learned. And she'd usually answer, “I don't know.”

Then the other day, I had to take an important phone call when Leah got home, and I couldn't question her right away. When I hung up and asked about her day, she had lots to say!



I realized that Leah needs a few minutes to switch from school mode to home mode before she's ready to chat. Now we sit down and eat a snack together, and I wait for her to start talking. More often than not, she's happy to open up and tell me all about her science experiment or a book her teacher read aloud.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Exploring with senses

This “sensory bin” stimulates your child's brain and boosts her creativity as she plays with objects that have different colors, shapes, and textures. *Bonus:* It's also a calming activity.

First, have your youngster cover the bottom of a clear, shallow container with a layer of shaving cream. Help her add small items like marbles, dice, buttons, beads, dry pasta, and plastic animals. Now encourage her to reach in and describe how the objects feel. (“The marbles are smooth, and the pasta is rough.”)

Together, brainstorm ideas for more sensory bins. An ocean bin might include blue gelatin dessert with plastic sea animals and seashells. Your child could even make up stories about them!♥



Q & A Getting your child to share

Q: My son gets upset when he has to share something with his sister. How should I handle this?

A: It may help to offer your child some control over what and how he shares. For example, you may decide he doesn't have to share his stuffed animals but the backyard swing is for sharing.

When possible, try to give your son advance notice that he'll need to share. You could say, “Your

sister wants a turn on the swing. I'm going to set a timer for 5 minutes, and then it's time for her to swing.”

Also, talk about sharing in everyday situations. You might let your youngster hear you say to your spouse, “There's

only enough coffee left for one cup—let's share!” He'll see that sharing is an important part of daily life, and he may be more willing to share.♥

