Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2015

Public School 214 Q
Denise Fuccillo, Principal

KID BITS

Together time

Busy school days zoom by in a rush. Keep life from feeling too hectic for your child by making time to connect with him each day. Build with blocks, play a game, or just cuddle and have a conversation. You'll build strong family bonds that will help him feel secure.

I know I can

When your youngster zips her own jacket or pours her own milk, she feels competent and grown-up. Encourage her to stay positive as she learns. If she can't get the zipper lined up, or if she spills the milk, have her say, "I know I can, I know I can" and try again. She'll learn to persist until she succeeds.

Count on a story

Turn read-aloud time into math time with this idea. As you read to your child, ask him math questions about the pictures. For example, challenge him to find three triangles in one picture or to count the cows in another. Have him compare numbers, too. "Are there more ponies inside the fence or outside the fence?"

Worth quoting

"There are not seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million." *Walt Streightiff*

Just for fun

Q: What goes up but never comes down?

A: Your age!

Good morning(s)

Starting the morning on a happy note can set the tone for your youngster's entire day. Use these tips to build a back-to-school routine that makes mornings flow smoothly at home, which helps days flow smoothly at school.

Before bed

What could your child do before bed to make her mornings easier? She might lay out her clothes and shoes, choose an item for show and tell, and decide what to eat for breakfast. Suggest that she create a poster with her to-do list. She could draw a picture of each nighttime task and tape the poster to her wall where she can check it before bed.

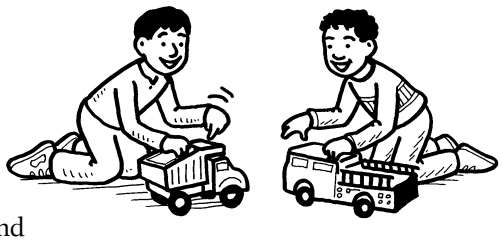
In the morning

Encourage your youngster to do the same things in the same order so they become a calm habit. For example, she can get dressed, eat breakfast, and then brush her teeth. Have her make up a fun song to sing as a reminder. "First I need to put on my clothes, first I need to put on my clothes, first I need to put on my clothes, and then it's time for breakfast!"

After school

Together, go through your child's backpack. Let her show you her papers and tell you about her day. Read notes and sign field trip permission slips. Then, help her pack items needed for the next day (tissues, change of clothes). Your youngster will love catching up with you, and you'll both get a jump on tomorrow.♥

Let's get acquainted



Making friends at school builds social skills and helps your child feel like he belongs. Give him confidence to meet new friends by rehearsing at home:

- Use toys to practice introductions. You might hold up a stuffed bunny and say, "I'm Rabbit. What's your name?" Your youngster could respond by holding up a plastic dinosaur and saying, "I'm Pete. Do you want to play a game?"
- To get to know classmates better, teach him to "tell and ask." First he *tells* something about himself: "I love dump trucks." Then, he *asks* a question: "What's your favorite kind of truck?"♥

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Be an alphabet detective

Every time your youngster plays with letters and the sounds they make, he's building skills that will help him read. Here are fun ways to explore the alphabet together.

Uncover an invisible letter. Use a white crayon to print an uppercase or a lowercase letter on white paper. Have your child slowly color over it with a washable marker. Can he name the letter and say its sound before it's completely revealed? Now have him print a letter for you to unmask.

Solve a mystery. Pretend you are a letter, and give your youngster clues to your identity. "I am the first letter in *boat*." "I make a *buh* sound." When he correctly names the letter (b), it's his turn to give you hints for a mystery letter.

Search for sounds. Help your child write each letter of the alphabet (uppercase and lowercase) on 26 separate sticky notes. Then, he can take the stack and search the house or yard for an item starting with each letter. Encourage him to put the sticky note on the matching object and say the letter and its sound. "P. *Puh*. P is for *picture!*" ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

My school bus

Your child can celebrate a new school year—and practice skills like recognizing shapes, cutting, and pasting—by making a school bus that features her.

Materials: *colored paper, scissors, glue, small photo of your youngster, crayons*

In a school parking lot or at a bus stop, encourage your youngster to look carefully at a school bus. What shapes does she notice? (Round wheels, square windows.) At home, have her draw and cut out a rectangle for her school bus. Then, she could cut out shapes and glue them on to make the wheels, windows, and a door.

Where would she want to sit on the bus? Let her decide and glue her photo into that window. She might even add photos of people she'd like to ride with (a sibling, her best friend). To finish her keepsake, have her write her name and the date on the side of the bus. Now she can display it for everyone to see.♥

Q & A

What a good helper!

Q: *I'm trying to teach my son to be more helpful. Any suggestions?*

A: Try starting with simple chores around the house like folding washcloths or putting away canned goods. Let your son set the table or mix the cornbread you're making for dinner. Knowing he has a part to play in your household will give him a sense of purpose.

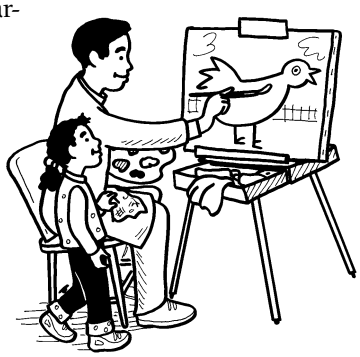
Outside the home, point out helpful things he can do, too. For instance, he might remove a large stick from the sidewalk to keep people from tripping or retrieve a dropped toy for a mom with a fussy baby. You'll show him that he can take initiative to help others.

Remember to thank your son for helping out, and soon he'll find ways to lend a hand without being asked.♥

Parents are learners, too

Your youngster might be surprised to find out that everyone learns—even grownups. Help her understand that learning is something to look forward to throughout her life by sharing your own learning adventures with her:

- Talk about classes you're taking. You could tell her about a training seminar you attended for your job or a painting class you signed up for at the community center.
- Let your child see you working on new projects. For example, show her diagrams for the cabinet you're building or the video on how to make a castle-shaped cake for her birthday.
- Learn about something together. If you both love the birds that sing in your backyard, visit the library to find books about what birds eat or how they care for their babies.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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