

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Little Ones Preschool, Inc.
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KID BITS

Healthy eyes

Did you know that children's eyes develop rapidly from ages three to seven? Your youngster needs clear vision, strong eye muscles, and good eye-hand coordination for reading and writing. Ask his pediatrician about a vision screening to detect and correct any problems.

Dressed for the weather

As the days get colder, your child will probably still go outside for recess. Check the forecast together, and have her pick out clothing that matches the weather. What should she wear if the temperature drops or if it's rainy? She will learn about weather conditions—and planning ahead.

Know your colors

Here's a memory booster to help your youngster recognize colors. Name three different-colored objects in the room (red plate, yellow toy car, blue block). Tell your youngster to find and touch them in the color order you say (red, yellow, blue). Then, mix up the order (blue, red, yellow), and have him try again.

Worth quoting

"One kind word can warm three winter months." *Japanese proverb*

Just for fun

Casey: "Moo! Quack! Meow!"

Dad: "What are you doing?"

Casey: "I'm saying hello in three different languages."



I can help!

Children who learn to help others are more likely to become helpful teens and adults. Plus, assisting people gives youngsters a sense of pride and accomplishment. Encourage a habit of helpfulness with these ideas.

Inspire considerate thinking

In everyday situations, prompt your child to think of ways to pitch in. For example, point out a newspaper blowing down the sidewalk and suggest that she pick it up and put it in the recycling bin. Or when a visiting friend spills a drink, ask her to help wipe it up. Over time, she'll begin to automatically think of ways to help.

Work together

Your youngster could be your assistant when you're lending a hand. If a neighbor loses a pet, she can carry "lost pet" flyers and help you hang them—or she might even make flyers herself. When you cook or do chores for a sick friend, she could help, too. You'll show



her that helping out is something she can regularly do for people.

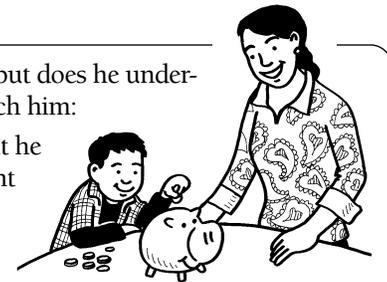
Give "tickets"

Suggest that your child make "handy helper" tickets as gifts for friends and relatives. For each ticket, trace her hand on paper. Then, let her add a note or a drawing explaining what the ticket is good for, such as playing with her baby cousin to give her aunt a coffee break, or dusting Grandma's furniture. She will learn that helping others can be a gift, too.♥

Money smart

Your child may have watched you use money, but does he understand how it works? Try these playful ways to teach him:

- Maybe he wants a new comic book. Suggest that he save money in a piggy bank or an empty jar. Count the coins together, and help him figure out how much more he needs to save. He'll build math skills in the process.
- He might create pretend money to use during imaginary play. Perhaps he'll "work" as a waiter or a cashier. Then, "pay" him for doing his make-believe job.
- Show your youngster how much money grocery coupons are worth. Point out the amount on the coupon, and help him count out pennies to match (30 pennies for a 30-cent coupon).♥



Let's go to the post office

Your youngster can learn a lot during a visit to the post office. Here are some activities to try on your next trip.

Addresses. While standing in line, talk about the parts of the addresses on your letters or packages (name, street address, zip code, return address). He could tell you the letters, words, and numbers he recognizes.



Size and shape. Use the display of mailing materials to take turns naming things that would fit in a certain box. Or let your child sort and stack your letters according to size.

Weight. Ask your youngster to hold two packages, one in each hand. He can use his hands as a “scale” to tell you which one is heavier or lighter.

Stamps. Together, look at the postage stamps for sale. Can he name what's on each stamp? Is it a plant, a building, a person, or an animal? Why does he think it's on a postage stamp? ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Animal tracks

Encourage your child to find out which animals visit his backyard or the local park by hunting for tracks together.

Materials: paper, crayons

Take a walk after a rain or snowstorm, and search for animal footprints in the mud



or snow. When he spies some, let him draw a picture of them and think about what kind of animal might have made them. For instance, does he think it's a big animal or a little one?

Follow the tracks, and ask what the animal might have been doing. If the prints lead to a puddle, maybe the animal wanted water.

Have your youngster label his drawings with the animal he thinks made the tracks. Later, help him check his predictions by looking up tracks in library books or online (try naturetracking.com). ♥

PARENT TO PARENT Our treasure chest

When I was little, my grandfather had a wooden box full of keepsakes—baby booties, old photos, news clippings. I loved learning about our family while sorting through those treasures, and I wanted to give our daughter Amari a similar experience.



I let Amari decorate a large shoebox. Then, I said we would fill the box with treasures that create a story about our family. First, Amari drew a picture of our apartment to show where we live. Then, she gathered photos of our family and cats. And I added Amari's first dress—she couldn't believe how little it was!

We keep putting in more pieces, like a ticket stub, a subway token, and the program from her school play. When visitors come, we sift through our mementos, and Amari uses them to tell family stories. ♥

Q & A Active play for winter days

Q: I've heard that getting enough exercise can help my daughter do better in school. What are some ideas for keeping her active this winter?

A: It's true. Children who get at least 60 minutes of physical play a day tend to be healthier and learn better.

The good news is that most youngsters this age are full of energy and want to be moving, especially if you're doing it with them.

Encourage an active lifestyle by making time each day for family play.

Try an after-dinner round of follow the leader. Put on music and invent animal dances—bunny hop or monkey strut, anyone? Play games like Twister that get everyone moving.

And keep outdoor play on the menu, too. If it snows, build a snow family or go sledding. You also could hike at a park or walk laps at a nearby mall, gym, or school track. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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