

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2010

Thunderbird Preschool

## KID BITS



### An earth-friendly home

Reusing household materials can teach your child to care about the environment. Together, think of ways to throw away less trash. For example, your family could use glasses and dishes instead of plastic cups and paper plates.

### Postcard search

When you visit an aquarium, a zoo, or a museum, make the gift shop your first stop. Let your youngster choose one postcard. As you tour the exhibits, have him look for what's in the picture (electric eel, panda). You'll build his observation skills and keep his attention focused.

### Sun protection

Spring means your little one will probably play outside more often. To protect her skin, use a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15—even on cloudy days. Apply it 30 minutes before she goes out, and reapply every two hours or when she gets out of a pool.

### Worth quoting

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall."

Nelson Mandela

### Just for fun

**Q:** Why did the boy sprinkle sugar on his pillow?

**A:** So he'd have sweet dreams.



## The three Cs of friendship

Friends make school, sports, and playtime more fun for your child. They can also boost his self-confidence and improve his social skills. Encourage your youngster to make friends by teaching him the three Cs of friendship.

### Caring

Through words and actions, good friends show that they care about each other. Explain to your child that this can be as simple as smiling and saying hi to a friend at school or giving a compliment ("I like your drawing" or "Nice catch!"). He can also let a classmate know he cares by spending time with him. They might eat lunch together, sit side by side during story hour, or help each other at cleanup time.

### Compassion

Your youngster can strengthen a friendship by showing compassion. Ask him to think about what makes him feel



better when he's unhappy (a high five, a funny joke). Suggest that he try one of those ideas when a friend is extra tired or feeling left out.

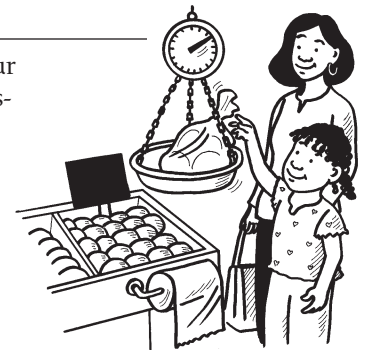
### Cooperation

Taking turns and sharing are important skills for making friends. When your child invites a classmate home and they're deciding what to play, teach him to let his guest choose first. Then, it will be his turn to pick what they'll do next. If they are coloring, encourage your youngster to share his favorite crayons.♥

## A healthy diet

The grocery store is a great place to teach your youngster about healthy eating. Try these suggestions as you shop together:

- Let your child decide which fruits and vegetables she wants. Explain that choosing a variety of colors (red apples, orange carrots, green beans) will give her different vitamins that she needs to stay healthy.
- Point out nutrition labels on dairy products. Tell your youngster that calcium builds strong bones and teeth. Together, look for calcium on the labels of dairy products like milk, yogurt, and cheese.
- Explain that the healthiest grains are labeled "100% whole." Ask your child to look for the "100" on bread, crackers, and pasta.♥



## Write away

Homemade books can make your child feel like a “real” author. Follow these steps to build her writing skills:

1. Stack three pieces of white paper on a sheet of construction paper. Fold all four sheets in half. Staple along the fold, and show your youngster how the pages open like a book.
2. Talk about things your child may want to write about. For instance, she could make a book that gives directions for an activity she likes, such as riding a scooter.



Or she might write a story about her friend’s new pet. She could also make a book about a topic (sports) that names a different kind on each page (soccer, baseball).

3. Suggest that she start by drawing a picture on every page. Ask questions to prompt her. *Examples:* “What’s the first thing you do to ride a scooter?” “What does the guinea pig eat?” “What are four sports that you like?”

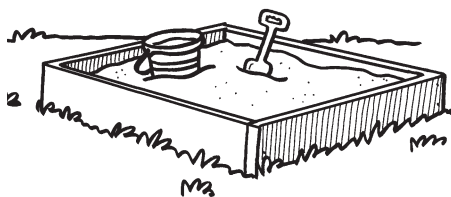
4. Help your youngster add words below each picture. You might say, “You know lots of words. How about writing some on your pages that tell about princesses?” ♥



## Q & A Switching gears

**Q:** When my daughter Chloe has to stop doing something she likes, she gets upset. How can I help her switch activities more easily?

**A:** Children often find it hard to stop a fun activity. You can make it easier by giving your daughter a heads-up. At the park, you might say, “We have to get your sister in 10 minutes. Do you want to play in the sandbox before we leave?”



Having something to look forward to may also help your youngster. When it’s time for bed, you can say, “We’ll read a story when you’re tucked in.”

Another idea is to sing a special song as you change activities. You can sing “We’re getting in the car” or “It’s time to go to bed” to the tune of “The Farmer in the Dell.” ♥

### 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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## PARENT TO PARENT

### Wants vs. needs

My son Ben went through a phase when he begged for everything he saw. He would “need” a toy just like his friend’s or want a game that he saw in a catalog.

I explained to Ben that *needs* are necessary things, such as a safe place to live and clothes to keep him warm. *Wants* are nice to have but not required. To help him understand, we walked around the house pointing out needs (jacket, blanket) and wants (stuffed animals, blocks). Ben was surprised to learn that he had many more wants than needs.

The next time Ben said he needed to watch a TV show, I reminded him of our conversation. He said, “Oh, yeah, I mean I *want* to watch it.” He’s also doing a little better about not asking me to buy things. ♥



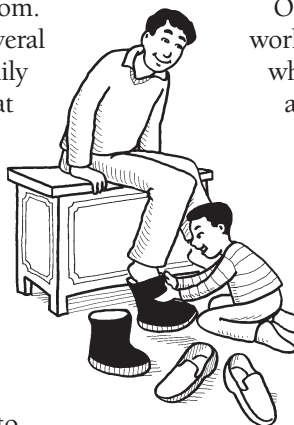
## ACTIVITY CORNER

### My shoe store

Playing shoe store is fun *and* educational. Here’s how to help your little one set up shop in your living room.

Let your youngster get several pairs of shoes from each family member’s closet. Suggest that he pick different kinds (boots, sandals, sneakers). He can practice classifying—an important math and science skill—by brainstorming several ways to arrange them. For instance, he could sort them according to color (brown, black, white), size (smallest to

largest), season (summer, winter), or purpose (sports, dress).



Once his store is set up, he can work on language skills. Ask him what a salesperson might say to a customer. (“May I help you?” “What kind of shoes are you looking for today?”) He can pretend to be the clerk and help family members choose and try on shoes.

*Note:* Be sure he puts everyone’s shoes back when he “closes” his shop! ♥