

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

April 2014



## KID BITS

### Springtime fun

With your youngster, see how many ways you can think of to spend pleasant spring days. For example, you could collect rocks, fly kites, or visit a new playground. Keep a list on the refrigerator, and take turns choosing an activity to do together.

### DID YOU KNOW?

Jigsaw puzzles let your child practice sorting and comparing. Help her pick out all the edge pieces and fit them together. Then, she could sort the rest according to color as she compares them to the picture on the box. If there's a blue sky, for instance, she can put all the blue pieces in a pile. *Tip:* Look for puzzles at yard sales and thrift stores.

### Chasing away bad dreams

Most youngsters have nightmares at some point. If your child is upset after a scary dream, help him make up a different ending for it. He might also want to draw a picture of the nightmare and then crumple it up and throw it away.

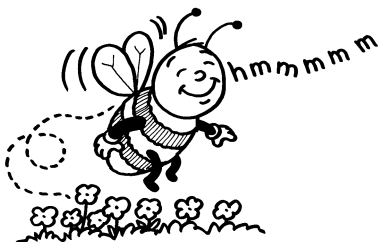
### Worth quoting

"When you're curious, you find lots of interesting things to do." *Walt Disney*

### Just for fun

**Q:** How can you tell that bees are happy?

**A:** They hum while they work!



Tom Thumb Campus  
Nancy Brophy, Director

## Our family shows character

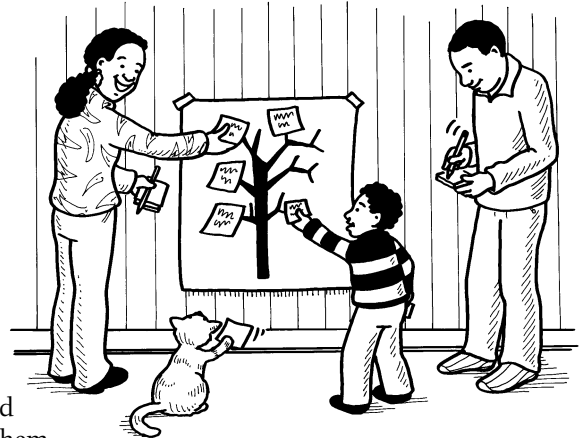
Little ones learn good character from the people they spend the most time with—their family! Help your child become more responsible, show appreciation, and develop a positive attitude with these ideas.

### Box up responsibility

Whether your youngster borrows a book from the library or a game from a friend, taking care of other people's property is a big responsibility. Together, create a safe place to put borrowed items when you're finished with them. He might use colored markers to decorate a cardboard box and write "To be returned" on it. Have him put the box by the front door or in the coat closet.

### Grow an appreciation tree

Ask your child to draw a bare tree on poster board. Then, he can watch it grow "leaves" as everyone writes things they're thankful for on sticky notes and adds them to the branches. After a week, let each person choose a favorite leaf and use it to write a thank-you note. If your youngster's leaf says "My teacher,"



he could make a card thanking his teacher for helping him learn to count.

### Turn a frown upside-down

Even bad days have good parts. When a family member has a rough day, focus on the positive by having a smiley-face dinner. During the meal, go around the table and share something that made you smile that day. *Example:* "I had a surprise visit with my best friend!" Taking time to focus on the good things will help your child develop a positive attitude. ♥

## My writing kit

Encourage your youngster to work on early writing skills with her very own writing kit. Here's how.

**1. Get a container.** Together, find a portable one that your child can close, like a small backpack or a plastic storage box.

**2. Add supplies.** Help your youngster gather pencils, erasers, crayons, colored pencils and pens, paper, and notebooks.

**3. Include writing ideas.** Cut letters and words from empty food packages for her to copy. Also, fill an envelope with interesting magazine pictures, stickers, and other items that might inspire her to write words, sentences, or stories. ♥



## Let me think...

Can your youngster come up with more than one solution or possibility when she's faced with a challenge? Help her stretch her thinking with these activities.

**Puppet problem-solving.** Offer a pretend dilemma for puppets, and help your child act out the solution. You could make your puppet say, "Oh, no! I have too many dishes to carry! How can I get them to the party?"  
*Examples:* Put them in a bag, ask a friend to take some.



**Answers and questions.** Tell your youngster, "The answer is a blanket. What is the question?" Take turns coming up with as many questions as possible. ("What keeps you warm at night?" "What do we sit on at a picnic?") When you run out of ideas, let her think of a new answer to make up questions for.

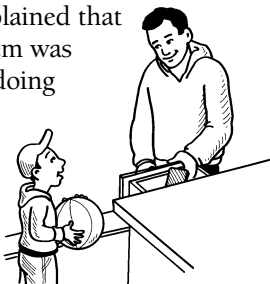
**What doesn't belong?** Look around the room, and name any four objects (T-shirt, book, sandals, lipstick). Then, have your child decide which doesn't belong and say why. For instance, she could say that the book is the only one you can't wear.  
*Variation:* Name three objects, and tell her to choose a fourth and explain how it's related to the three you picked.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Cutting back on screen time

At my son Jack's recent check-up, his pediatrician told us that kids should have less than two hours of screen time each day. I realized that between watching TV and playing games on my smartphone, Jack got way more!

The doctor explained that the biggest problem was what Jack *wasn't* doing during screen time. She said children his age stay healthier and learn more when they run around and play.



She shared practical ways to cut back, and we tried them at home. For instance, now I put my phone away when I play with Jack—out of sight, out of mind. Also, when he asks to play on the computer, I suggest an active alternative like walking the dog, riding bikes, or playing hide-and-seek.

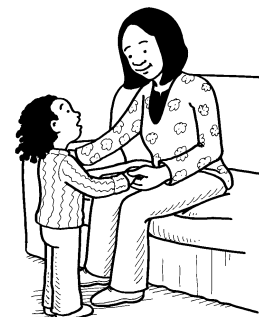
Jack's screen time is finally down to less than two hours a day, and we're all spending more time being active.♥

## Q & A When your child is teased

**Q:** My daughter doesn't want to go to school because she says one of the girls teases her every day. What can I do?

**A:** Since this is happening on a regular basis, it sounds like your child is not just being teased, she's being bullied. Start by contacting her teacher. She will be able to work with your daughter to help her handle the situation.

At home, reassure your child that you love her and that bullying isn't her fault. Also, talk about ways she could react if she's teased in the future. You might help her practice different things to say, such as, "That isn't nice. I'm going to play with someone else."♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER The view from my window

When your child looks out his window, he may see a city street or a green field. He can learn about geography by collecting an "album" full of views from different windows.

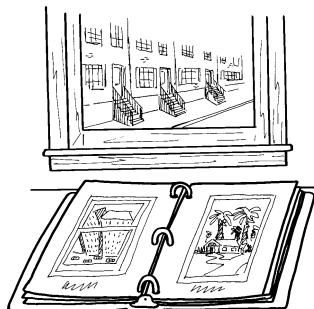
**Materials:** paper, crayons, binder

Have your youngster draw what he sees outside his window. Then, he can ask relatives to take and mail him photos of their views. Maybe he'll get to see his aunt's view of the yellow taxis and mirrored skyscrapers

from her city apartment. Or perhaps his grandfather will send a picture of his street full of palm trees. Let your child put all the pictures in his binder.

Also, suggest that your youngster look in books or magazines for places to sketch. For example, after reading about outer space, he might draw what astronauts see from the International Space Station.

Finally, help your youngster compare the places in his album. How are they similar and different?♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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