

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

March 2006

TINY TOT PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

KID BITS



It's in the mail!

Planning a special get-together? Enlist your child's help with the invitations. She can practice her writing skills while learning how to address an envelope. Let her put on the stamps and drop the invitations in the mailbox. Explain that the postman will deliver them to the people you invited.

DID YOU KNOW?

The American Dental Association recommends that children brush at least twice a day with fluoride toothpaste (if they can spit it out). By the time your youngster is six or seven, she will probably be able to brush her own teeth but may still need help with flossing.

The value of a dollar

Giving your child an allowance—even a few quarters a week—is an easy way to teach money management. Let him choose how to spend it and how much to save. *Example:* He could buy a small treat (animal crackers) and save the rest for something bigger (a soccer ball).

Worth quoting

"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people." *Victor Borge*

Just for fun

Q: What is gray, has four legs, and jumps up and down?

A: An elephant on a trampoline.



Teaming up for behavior

Your child's teacher sends home a note in her backpack: She has been speaking out of turn in class. How should you react?

Use this as an opportunity to show your child that you and her teacher are a team. Tell her that you both care about her success in school—and her behavior is an important part of that. Here's how:



■ First, approach your child with a tone that's not accusing. Say, "Sounds like you had a rough morning. Let's talk about this letter from your teacher."

■ Next, help your youngster understand why it's important not to disrupt the class. For example, tell her that the other children can't hear the teacher or get their work done. Talk about what would happen if all the students talked out of turn in class. Would she and her friends be able to learn?

■ Then, go over the rule for talking in class. Remind your child that raising her hand and waiting for the teacher to call on her shows respect for her teacher and classmates.

■ Finally, have your youngster watch while you write back to the teacher. In your letter, explain that you and your child talked about her behavior, and ask the teacher to let you know if it happens again.

Tip: If your child continues to misbehave at school, contact the teacher and schedule a time to talk. ♥

Hobby hints

Hobbies benefit people of all ages. Helping your child find one he enjoys can give him something to feel proud of—and may even provide him with a lifelong interest. Consider these ideas.

Start a collection. Spark your youngster's excitement by pointing out some unusual rocks, marbles, or stamps.

Put them in a shoebox or on a shelf, and encourage him to add more as he finds them.

Shop around. Browse a discount store for items that might inspire a hobby. *Examples:* deck of cards (to play games or do tricks), model kits.

Get crafty. If crafts are your thing, share one with your child. Ideas include making friendship bracelets, paper flowers, tie-dyeing, and mosaics. ♥



Skills checklist

The school year is more than halfway over. Is your child ready for next year? Here are some milestones to look for.

Upcoming kindergartners can probably...

- ✓ Sit and listen to a picture book
- ✓ Memorize familiar books; turn pages correctly while pretending to read
- ✓ Recognize most uppercase letters and some lowercase ones; read and write their own name; pretend to write stories
- ✓ Identify rhyming words
- ✓ Recognize numerals 1–9; count up to 10 objects
- ✓ Match and sort items according to

size, shape, and color; recognize basic shapes and colors

Children starting first grade can probably...

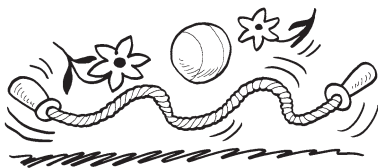
- ✓ Retell simple stories
- ✓ Point to individual words while reading simple books with repeating phrases
- ✓ Read and write all uppercase and lowercase letters
- ✓ Recognize many letter sounds; identify beginning sounds in some words
- ✓ Begin to read and write familiar words; read their own writing
- ✓ Write numerals 1–9; count to 20
- ✓ Create patterns; recognize some coins; tell time to the hour



Note: Each child learns at his own pace. If you are unsure about your youngster's progress, talk with his teacher. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Obstacle course

You can help your child polish her large-motor skills and get some exercise with this activity. You'll need items like hula hoops, sidewalk chalk, jump ropes, and large balls.



Line up the hoops on the sidewalk (or draw circles with chalk). Leave just enough space between them so it's a challenge for your youngster to jump from one to the other. Or she can pedal a bike around the hoops.

Then, draw a "balance beam" on the sidewalk with chalk, and encourage your child to walk forward, backward, or sideways on it. Challenge her to bounce a ball or jump rope as she makes her way across the beam. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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PARENT TO PARENT

Becoming a good listener

"Mo-o-o-m, did you hear me?" my son Michael asked in frustration. "Of course," I said. But he could tell I wasn't listening. That's when I realized that I often don't give Michael my full attention.

So, I decided to make some changes. I've begun putting away my briefcase and turning off my cell phone when I get home. I make a point to comment on things Michael tells me so he knows I'm really listening. For example, when he said, "Jack made up a new game at recess today," I asked him, "How do you play it?" I also try to remember what he tells me so I can ask questions about it the next day: "Did you play Jack's game again?"

Michael appreciates my "active" listening—and I learn more and more about his day each time we talk. ♥



Q & A Computer learning

Q: My daughter loves playing with our computer. How can I make her time on it educational as well as fun?

A: Computers can be valuable tools for learning. Here are several things your youngster can do.

Have your child dictate a message for you to e-mail to a family member or a

friend. She'll enjoy getting a response, and you can help her read it. You could also let her type simple words or the alphabet. Typing will help her learn the words and letters—and give her practice with the keyboard.

Explore educational software together. *Millie's Math House* teaches youngsters numbers, patterns, shapes, and problem solving. *Alphabet Express Preschool* lets kids identify letters, match letters with sounds, navigate mazes, and hear songs. Or your child can express her creativity with *Kid Pix Deluxe 4* art software, which has drawing, painting, and animation features. ♥

