

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

October 2006

Tiny Tot Preschool & Kindergarten

KID BITS



Step by step

When your child has an assignment, help him break it into small parts. Say he's asked to take three family pictures to school. First, have him look through photos and put sticky notes on the backs of ones he likes. Next, let him pick his favorites. Finally, he can put them in his backpack.

Virtual art

Paint a jungle, build a virtual sculpture, or create an online collage. These are all amazing activities your child can do at the National Gallery of Art Kids Web site (www.nga.gov/kids/kids.htm). Plus, she can play art-inspired games and view famous works of art. The activities will spark creativity and encourage her to do "off-line" artwork too.

On time

Help your children be on time for school. For one week, keep track of how long they need to get ready. Then, set alarm clocks to allow five minutes of extra time. Or use a timer—have it go off five minutes before everyone should head out the door.

Worth quoting

"A good book is the best of friends, the same today and forever."

Martin Tupper

Just for fun

Q: Why are clocks always tired?

A: You would be, too, if you had to run all day.



Shhh...quiet discipline

Have you ever noticed that a whisper gets more attention than a shout?

When kids are acting up, it can be tempting to yell at them. But trying something new and unexpected, like whispering, may help you keep your cool—and get the results you want. Try these ideas.



● **Make a suggestion.** Suppose you're out having dinner and your daughter is blowing bubbles in her milk through her straw. Quietly ask, "Can you show me the right way to drink your milk?"

● **Model behavior.** If she's following you through a department store and pulling at the hanging clothes, show her how to walk properly. For example, demonstrate putting your hands in your pockets, clasping your hands together, or holding a small toy.

● **Switch gears.** When things get loud or chaotic, do something to get your youngster's attention. Sing a song, close your eyes and count to 10, or take her outside or to another room.

● **Notice effort.** You can inspire good behavior by pointing out when your child tries to do the right thing. *Example:* She's kicking the back of your seat while you drive. When you ask her to stop, and she does, say, "I know it's hard to be still, but you showed me you could do it for a whole minute. Let's see if you can keep that up until we get home." ♥

Learning around the house

Looking for creative ways to keep your youngster busy? Here are some items you have at home that can teach him a thing (or two):

1 Fill a plastic container with dry rice. Give your child cups and spoons, and let him scoop and pour to practice small-motor skills.

2 Use an old sheet to teach teamwork. Have your child and a few



friends stand in a circle and hold onto the sheet with both hands. Then, they can lift it up high and scoot underneath the ends to make a tent. Or they can play "popcorn" by putting balls on the top and bouncing the sheet up and down. Either way, they'll need to cooperate to make the games work. ♥

Weather science

Does your child find shapes in clouds? Does he get excited when he sees his breath on a cold day? Try using his natural interest in weather to teach him about science.

Predict the weather

Look at the sky together. Explain to your youngster that a blue sky with puffy, white clouds usually means it will be a sunny day. A gray one with thick, black clouds could mean rain or a thunderstorm.

Talk about the seasons

While trading summer clothes for sweaters and coats, tell your child what animals do to make it through the winter (bears hibernate, rabbits grow thicker fur). Rake leaves into



piles, and jump in them. Let your child know that leaves change color and fall from trees in autumn to make way for new ones in the spring.

Play with ice and steam

Put an ice cube in a zipper bag for each of you. Who can melt the cube the fastest? *Ideas:* Sit on it; hold it in your hands.

Point out how the ice turns back into water when it warms up. Also, let your child draw on the bathroom mirror after a bath. Explain that freezing water makes ice, and heating it creates steam. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

“I Spy”

“I spy something that is tall, green, and brown. Animals can live in it. What is it?”

If you said, “A tree,” then you’re on your way to playing this fun game with your youngster. She can learn to notice details, describe things, and use reasoning skills by playing I Spy.

Take turns choosing an object and then describing it in two or three sentences.

Use as many details as possible (tell what color it is, what

sound it makes, and what it is used for). *Example:* “I spy something that is black, makes a humming noise, and cuts grass.” (A lawnmower.)

You may need to do all the describing when you first start playing. But your child will probably catch on soon and will want to have you guess what she spies! ♥

Q & A

Birthday books

Q: My daughter’s birthday is coming up, and our relatives would like gift ideas. What can I ask for that will be fun and educational?

A: A child can never have too many books. Why not use your daughter’s birthday as a chance to build her library? These titles make great gifts:

- *Harold and the Purple Crayon* by Crockett Johnson: A young boy takes a walk one evening with a crayon and draws a fantasy world on the way.
- *Happy Birthday, Moon* by Frank Asch: Bear thinks he is having a conversation with the moon, but he’s really talking to the echo of his own voice.
- *The Mitten* by Jan Brett: One after another, animals hide out in a mitten during a snowstorm, stretching it until it can’t hold one more animal. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Family chores

My husband and I recently started giving our twins chores to do. We wanted to teach them to be responsible and, at the same time, help us get things done around the house.

We quickly learned that it’s more efficient—and more fun—if we all work together. For example, when it’s time to clear the table, each person puts his or her own dishes in the sink. My husband or I rinse them and then hand them to one of the

kids to put in the dishwasher. One of us wipes the table, while someone else uses the handheld vacuum to get crumbs off the floor.

The twins also enjoy doing anything with water—washing windows, watering plants, and giving the dog a bath. We’re happy to know that with a little help from us, they can be a big help around the house! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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