

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2006

TINY TOT PRESCHOOL & KINDERGARTEN

KID BITS



Motivated to read

Make reading coupons by writing "I caught you reading" on slips of paper. Then, give them to your kids. When they see each other or another family member reading anything (traffic sign, magazine, electric bill), they hand out a coupon. The person with the most coupons at the end of the week wins a prize.

Outdoor safety

During the spring months, children often spend a lot of time outdoors. Remind your youngster never to put leaves, berries, or mushrooms in her mouth. Make sure she knows that although they may be colorful and look safe, they could be poisonous and make her sick.

Imaginary friends

Does your youngster have an imaginary playmate? Pretend-play is important for a child's development. If your little one asks you to hold his "friend's" hand while crossing the street, don't be afraid to go along with it. Eventually, he will outgrow his imaginary friend.

Worth quoting

"We shall never know all the good that a simple smile can do."

Mother Teresa

Just for fun

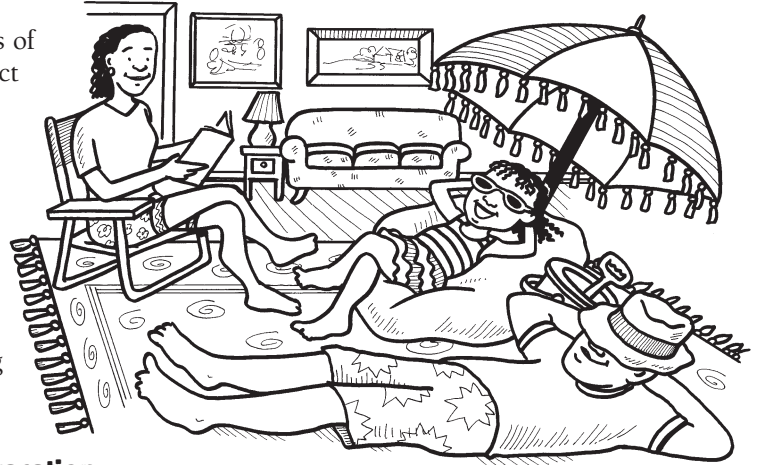
Q: What do dragons like most about school?

A: The fire drills!



Summertime is family time

The long, lazy days of summer are the perfect time to focus on family. With busy school days behind you, plan some relaxing activities that will help everyone build bonds and stay close. Enjoy laughing and learning together with these suggestions.



Plan a rainy-day vacation

Pack a suitcase full of snacks, books, art supplies, and games. Then, take a trip—to your basement or family room! Create silly dances to fun music. Put on swimsuits, and relax on beach towels. Serve refreshing drinks, like fruit smoothies. *Idea:* Make a sun and some palm trees out of construction paper to hang on the walls.

Have family "talk time"

Once a week, gather in the living room, turn off the television, and talk about things that are important to your family. Let everyone take turns choosing the topic. *Examples:* Decide how to celebrate an upcoming birthday; brainstorm ways to save enough money for a swing set.

Get out and explore

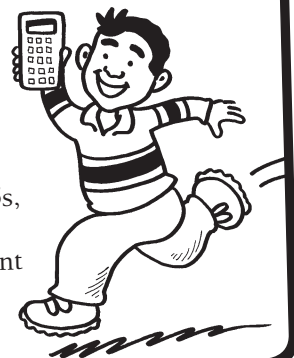
Find ways to enjoy the outdoors together. Visit a local farm to see how many different kinds

of plants you can find and perhaps pick some strawberries. Does your city have a nature center? Watch frogs, ducks, and turtles in their habitats. Or stop by a local store that you've never been to, such as a hobby shop or an art studio. ♥

Calculate it!

Looking for an easy way to give your child practice with numbers and counting? Introduce him to a calculator:

- Ask questions that require a number answer, and have him type his answer on the calculator. *Examples:* his age, the number of children in his class, the number of days in the month.
- Type in a number you'd like your child to know by heart, such as your phone number, house number, or 911. Have him memorize it and practice pressing the numbers himself.
- Show your youngster how to skip count (count by 2s, 5s, etc.). Press "+" and "2" (or any number you wish to count by), and keep on pressing the equal sign. ♥



Attention 1-2-3

As every parent knows, young children are in constant motion. Being still and paying attention can be quite a challenge for little ones. Help your child focus with these tips:

▲ Let him “shake the sillies out” before sitting down for a snack or story. Try singing or chanting a song like: “We’re gonna shake, shake, shake our sillies out; shake, shake, shake our sillies out; shake, shake, shake our sillies out; and wiggle our waggles



and order will help increase his attention span. ♥

away.” Encourage him to move as much as he wants during the song. Explain that when the song’s over, it’s time to sit quietly.

▲ Help your youngster see what paying attention looks like. For example, begin to draw a picture. Show your child that someone who is focusing on his work is looking at his paper, being fairly still, and not talking.

▲ Keep rules consistent. If your child has trouble sitting at the dinner table, don’t give in and let him eat on the couch. Predictability



Q & A Losing a pet

Q: My daughter’s pet goldfish died a few weeks ago, and she’s still upset over it. How can I help?

A: Your daughter has probably realized for the first time that living things can die.

It’s important that your youngster be allowed to feel sad. Listen to her and sympathize:

“I know you loved your fish and you miss him. I’m here whenever you need to talk.”



Your child might ask where her fish is or when he’s coming back. If she does, gently remind her that her pet is gone. Also, offer positive memories: “It was fun picking him out at the pet store,” or, “You were very grownup feeding him every day.”

Don’t be in a hurry to replace your youngster’s pet unless she suggests it—she may think you aren’t taking her feelings seriously. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT True or false?

I overheard my son telling a friend that we’re going to a huge amusement park this summer. Justin told quite a story—how we had bought our plane tickets and are staying for a month.

At first I was upset. Then I realized I don’t always tell the truth either. Justin had recently heard me tell a friend I’d love to babysit but then complain about it when I got off the phone.

I decided we needed to talk. I said, “It’s really important to tell the truth, but it’s not always easy. Even Mommy can have a hard time.” I explained that if he doesn’t tell the truth, people will stop believing what he says.

The other day I asked Justin if he had finished his chores. He usually says yes without thinking. I was pleasantly surprised when he responded, “I really want to go outside, but I’m not done yet.” I think we’ve both learned a valuable lesson! ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Time capsule

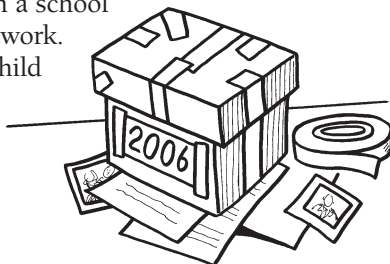
In the future, you and your child can travel back in time to this school year. How? By making a time capsule.

Start by collecting items that the two of you want to include. *Examples:* a class photo, a program from a school play, samples of homework.

Suggest that your child write a letter telling about her interests (best school subject, special friends, favorite lunch foods).

She might also want to draw a picture of a special school event or activity, such as a holiday party or concert.

Put everything in a box or other sturdy container. Invite your child to decorate the time capsule with markers or crayons. *Hint:* Together, choose a date in the future to open the capsule, such as when she graduates from elementary school. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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