

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2020

Carbon County Child Development Program

KID BITS



What day is it?

Give your youngster practice using a calendar. Each morning, ask him to announce the date. ("Today is Monday, May 18!") Suggest that he keep track of the date by crossing off each day's square before he goes to bed.

Safe in the sun

Your child needs sunscreen every time she goes outside, even on cloudy days. Apply a broad-spectrum, water-resistant sunscreen (SPF 30 or higher), and reapply every 2 hours. It's also a good idea to play in the shade when the sun's rays are the strongest (10 a.m. to 4 p.m.).

Thank you, teacher!

Show appreciation for the teacher—and have fun with your youngster at the same time. How? Bake cookies or muffins together, and then take them to school. No time to cook? Help your child pick out fresh treats at a bakery.

Worth quoting

"There are not seven wonders of the world in the eyes of a child. There are seven million." *Walt Stiegritt*

Just for fun

Q: What is brown, hairy, and wears sunglasses?

A: A coconut on vacation.



Destination: Summer learning

Treat each place your family goes this summer as a leg of your child's learning journey. Here are activities to try right in your community.

Library

Help your youngster sign up for the library's summer reading program. Then, visit regularly to check out books from the list. Participating in the program is an easy way to find high-quality books for kids her age, and she'll enjoy tracking her progress. Also, get a calendar of library events. Let her circle ones to attend together like a story hour, board game night, or sing-along.

Parks

Explore science and nature at local parks. Suggest that your child use index cards to make "trading cards" for animals and plants she spots in each park. She could draw and label a squirrel, moss on a tree trunk, and a patch of bluebells. Now let her keep her cards in a zipper



bag to take to each new park you visit. Does she see any of the same things in different parks?

Public transportation

Your child can learn a lot from riding buses, trains, and subways. Look at the transit map together. Point out where you are and where you're going. Have her count the stops in between, then count down to your destination. Also, talk about what's outside the window. She might compare scenery in a rural area (cows, crops, barns) with sights in a town (shops, traffic lights, taxis).♥

Smooth transitions

Switching from one activity or place to another can be tough for little ones. Try these strategies to make transitions easier for your youngster.

● **Give a heads-up.** Help your child gradually prepare to switch gears. You might tell him, "We're going to eat dinner in five minutes. It's time to start cleaning up your toys." Then, remind him again when there are two minutes left.

● **Sing songs.** Invent "getting ready" lyrics for familiar tunes. For instance, sing "Coat, Backpack, Shoes, and Hug" ("Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes") together in the morning. This playful idea will remind your youngster exactly what he needs to do as he prepares to leave the house and go to school.♥



Sights and sounds of respect

The first step toward being respectful is knowing what respect looks like and sounds like. Help your child understand respect with these ideas.

Looks like. When you read to your youngster, have him be on the lookout for respectful people. Maybe he'll see an athlete shaking hands with an opponent in a biography. Then, suggest that your child draw a picture of



himself being respectful. His scene might show him knocking on a closed door (respect for privacy) or throwing away trash at the playground (respect for property).

Sounds like. Brainstorm words and phrases that show respect. Your youngster might name *please* and *thank you* as respectful words. You could point out that using titles before people's names (Mrs., Mr., Aunt, Uncle) shows respect, too. Then, have him listen carefully for examples of respect throughout the day, and share new ones he hears.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a marble run

Let your youngster design a maze that a marble could roll through. She'll explore engineering—and end up with a new homemade toy.

Materials: tape, empty cereal box, safety scissors, pencil, straws, marble

1. Help your child tape a cereal box closed and cut off the front panel.
2. Place the box open side up, and have your youngster label one corner "Start" and the opposite corner "Finish."



3. She can cut straws to different lengths and tape them inside the box to create a zig-zag path wide enough for a marble.

4. To play, your youngster should place a marble at the start and tilt the box in different directions to move the marble through the maze. Can she get it all the way to the finish? If not, she could redesign the maze by moving the straws around, and then retest.♥

Q & A

Expand your child's curiosity

Q: My son asks a lot of questions. Sometimes I don't know the answers. What should I say?

A: It's great that your little one is so curious. When he asks a question you can't answer, the best response is, "I don't know. Let's find out!" Then, look for the answer together—he'll see that grown-ups are learning, too.

For instance, if your child asks how fireflies light up, check out a library book or search "fireflies" online. Or ask someone you think would know like an uncle who studies insects as a hobby. Use what you learn as a jumping-off point for even more learning. What other animals light up? Why do they light up? Where do they live?

Finally, share what you wonder about, too ("Why does lightning come before thunder?"), and the two of you can search for the answer.♥



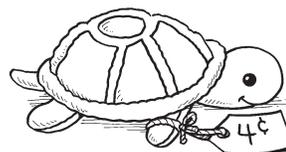
Money basics

"How much does that cost?" "Why can't I buy it?" Youngsters have a lot to learn about money. Use these kid-friendly tips:

- Talk about needs and wants. A simple way to do this is to make a grocery list together. Say, "Let's write what we need first. Then, we can add what we want." Start with necessities like bread, fruit, and toilet paper. At the bottom,

your child might put ice cream or cookies.

- Play toy store to teach your youngster about budgeting. Have her put price tags on her toys, and give her a set number of pennies. She can choose how many to spend and how many to save, then pretend to shop. She'll practice making spending decisions based on how much money she has left.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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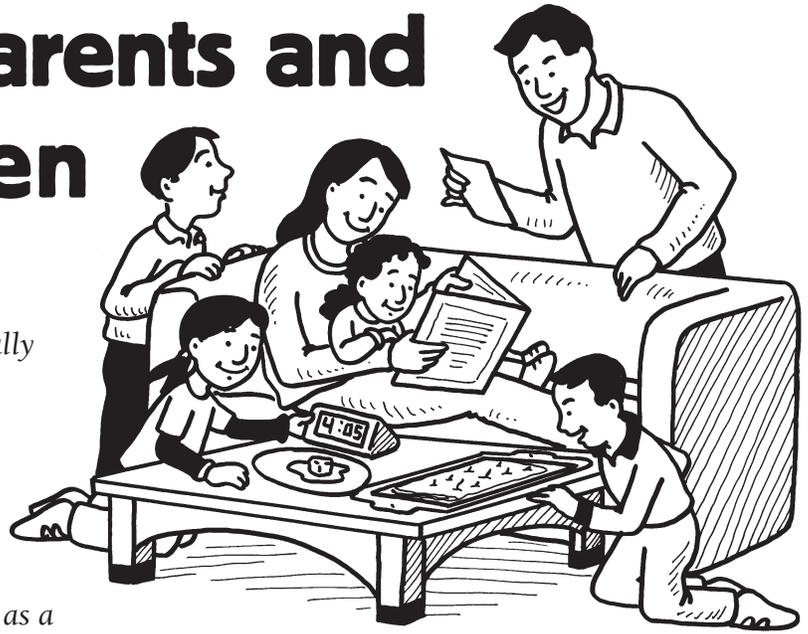
APRIL 2020

COVID-19 SPECIAL EDITION:

Support for Parents and Young Children

Your children's world has changed dramatically in the course of just a few weeks. They're home from school, missing their friends and teachers, and confused about why they can't visit with relatives or go to the playground.

As a parent, you may feel overwhelmed and uncertain about what to do. Use this guide as a starting point for supporting your youngsters during the coronavirus crisis.



Editor's note: Guidelines are changing rapidly. Make sure to follow all local, state, and federal laws and recommendations on social distancing and other practices when using these ideas.

Boost well-being

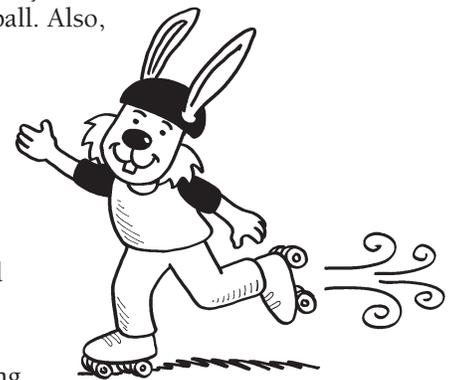
Your child is likely experiencing conflicting emotions. She's probably happy to be home with you—but also bored because she can't go anywhere. Here are ways to maintain some semblance of normalcy.

Find the positives. Look for bright moments each day. For instance, maybe you don't have to commute to your job right now, so you have time before work to snuggle up and read with your youngster. Or perhaps a family birthday party was canceled, but now even people who live far away can celebrate with you...via video chat.

Encourage play. Children need plenty of time to play—especially in difficult times. Together, pull out old toys he may not have played with in a while. It'll be like getting brand-new toys! He can also turn household items into toys. A large cardboard box could be a space station or an art studio (he can color the inside with crayons or markers). A blanket might become a cape or a pond.



Stay physically active. Play catch or kick around a soccer ball. Also, let your child set up a backyard obstacle course. She could arrange outdoor items like pool noodles, jump ropes, hula hoops, and old towels—and then lead the whole family through her course.



Do for others. Thinking of others gets your child outside of thinking about the situation he's in. He might make cards for people who are working hard to help us, such as nurses and paramedics. He could also use chalk to draw pictures and leave thank-you messages on the sidewalk for delivery truck drivers and mail carriers.

Enjoy the great outdoors. Spending time in nature is a proven stress reliever. Plant a garden. Try stargazing at night or bird-watching in the daytime. Have breakfast, lunch, or dinner picnics in the backyard or on the balcony—and invite stuffed animals to join.

continued

Early Years

Learning activities at home

Teachers don't expect you to homeschool your youngsters—but you can keep the learning going. Encourage your child to participate in any online school activities like virtual circle time or PE class. In addition, use these ideas during your free time or when you do your own work.

Story time. Read to your youngster each day. Enjoy favorites from your bookshelves, and download e-books from the public library. When you're busy, she could listen to authors, teachers, and librarians read at storylineonline.net or on YouTube.

Kitchen math. Ask your child to take “inventory.” He can sort pantry items by food group, such as protein (canned tuna, beans) or fruits and vegetables (raisins, tomato sauce). Then, suggest that he make a graph by lining up the packages in even rows and columns. Together, count the foods in each group. Which group has the most? The least?

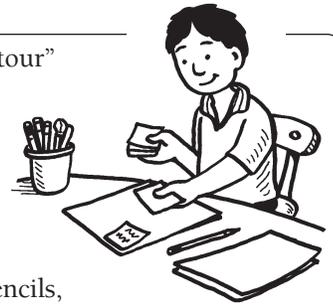
Nature walks. Go outdoors so your child can observe trees, flowers, and animals. Take along a notebook for drawing and labeling items, and carry a bag for collecting rocks, acorns, and other natural items from the ground. At home, she could create a “science museum” to display her pictures

and objects—and give you a “tour” when you're not working.

Writer's den. Help your youngster set up a special spot for drawing and writing, perhaps near your workstation. He could decorate containers to hold utensils (pencils, crayons, markers, pens) and things to write on (paper, sticky notes, paper bags, index cards).

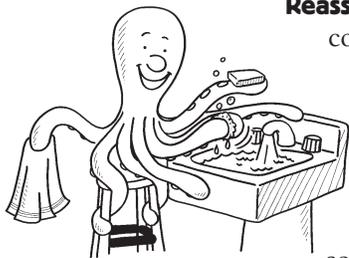
Science lab. Encourage your child to conduct hands-on experiments. She could predict which household items will sink or float in the kitchen sink, then test her predictions. Or have her predict which objects are magnetic and use a refrigerator magnet to see how many she got right.

Idea: Give your youngster a stack of index cards. On each one, have him illustrate a quiet activity to do independently during your working hours. He might draw a book on one card, a can of play dough on another, and a jigsaw puzzle on a third. Then, he can pick one card at a time and do that activity. Be sure to let him show you his work!



Reduce anxiety

It's normal for youngsters—and adults—to feel stressed when their schedules change or life is unpredictable. Consider this advice for helping your little one cope.



Reassure your child. Having some control over a situation can limit anxiety. Talk to him about what your family is doing to stay safe—and to help others be safe. Examples include washing hands often, staying at home, and social distancing (staying at least six feet away from people who don't live with you).

Stick to routines. Have your youngster go to bed and wake up at her usual time. Also, encourage her to dress in regular clothes. If she asks to stay in pajamas, consider setting aside a special PJs day each week. Wearing daytime clothes on other days contributes to a sense of normalcy. And plan regular mealtimes rather than letting everyone snack all day.

Turn off the news. It's important to stay informed, but news can make your child anxious. Try to tune in after he goes to bed. Use kid-friendly language to explain the situation. *Example:* “A lot of people are sick right now. We are staying home to be healthy and help stop the germs from spreading.”

“See” friends and relatives

Help your little one stay close to the people who are important to your family. Try these suggestions for keeping in touch via Skype, FaceTime, or other video-chat platforms.

Play with friends. Help your child find ways to “get together” with her classmates. They might have a virtual concert by singing favorite songs or playing homemade instruments. Or they could perform magic tricks, hold a pet talent show, or tell jokes.

Spend time with relatives. Set up video calls with grandparents, uncles, aunts, and cousins. Encourage your youngster to ask how they're doing and tell them about your family's day. You might even have virtual game nights. Play Mother May I? (or Grandma May I?), Simon Says, I Spy, and Red Light, Green Light.



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