

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2015

Maury County Schools



KID BITS

Find and use maps

Maps are everywhere!

And your youngster will use them when he studies history and geography (and goes places). At the mall, zoo, or bus station, have him pick up a map and pinpoint your location (boys' clothes, reptile house, Main Street Station). *Idea:* Let him keep the maps in a folder to look at any time.

Appreciate differences

With your child, take turns naming ways you are alike ("We both have curly hair and like walks in the rain") and different ("I love spinach, but you like carrots better"). You'll help her understand that people don't have to have everything in common to get along.

Join the club

Do you have ideas for making your child's school a better place to learn and play? A parent-teacher group (PTA, PTO, steering committee) lets you share your thoughts and support the school. Watch newsletters or the school website for meeting dates, and plan to attend.

Worth quoting

"Believe you can, and you're halfway there." *Theodore Roosevelt*

Just for fun

Q: What is striped and goes round and round?

A: A zebra in a revolving door.



Building parent-child bonds

A little time and attention can be all it takes to make your child feel special. Turn everyday activities into bonding moments with these simple tips.

Be present

Your youngster knows when she has your attention—and when you are distracted. If she wants you when you're in the middle of something, resist the urge to multitask, and let her know you will give her a turn as soon as possible. "I have to finish filling out this form, and then I can look at your drawing." You'll show her that she is a priority, even if she has to wait a few minutes.

Talk about disagreements

She wants to stay up and watch a movie. You want her to go to bed. Listen to your child's side, and give her the reason behind your decision. "That looks like a good movie, but you have school tomorrow. We'll have to save it for the weekend." Letting her know you're



willing to listen now will make her more likely to discuss important issues with you as she gets older.

Be a team

Squeeze quality time into everyday tasks. Sing silly songs together on the way to the coffee shop. Give her a role to play during errands, like pushing the elevator buttons at the doctor's office or scanning items at the grocery store self-checkout. While you're getting things done, you're connecting with each other and making memories.♥

Let's read aloud

Reading aloud is a cozy way to spend time with your youngster—and to prepare him for reading on his own. Try these three ideas.

1. Play storybook hide-and-seek. Each day, hide a "surprise" book in a different spot. Your child will look forward to searching for it after school—when he finds the book, it's story time!

2. Share breakfast giggles. Look in the newspaper for a comic strip your youngster might enjoy, such as *Peanuts* or *Garfield*. Then, read it together over breakfast.

3. Look forward to magazines. Consider subscribing to a children's magazine like *Highlights High Five* or *Humpty Dumpty*. Set aside time to snuggle up and read new poems, stories, and articles each month.♥



Finding winter

Winter is in full swing, and it's a cool time for your youngster to use his five senses. Try these activities to explore the season together while he practices observing and describing.

See: Bundle up, and take a walk together. Ask your child to point out wintry things he notices. *Examples:* bare tree branches, frost on car windows, winter flowers, his breath. At home, he can draw pictures of the sights he saw.

Hear: Together, close your eyes, and listen for winter sounds like the heater running or sleet hitting the roof. Then, take turns making winter noises and guessing what they



(scarf, icicle) to feel their textures. Can he find something for each word?

Smell: Open a window, and encourage your child to take a deep whiff and tell you what he smells. He might notice smoke from a neighbor's fireplace or the scent of pine.♥

are. For instance, zip up a jacket, or stomp your boots on the doormat.

Taste: Let your youngster help you make a recipe your family especially enjoys on cold days, such as chili or stew. Ask him to describe its taste. ("It's spicy, and I can taste peppers and onions.")

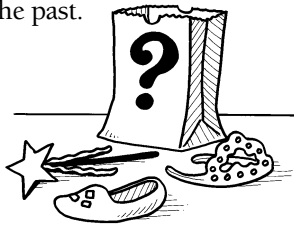
Touch: List words that describe how winter-related objects feel (*fuzzy, slippery*).

ACTIVITY CORNER

Be an archaeologist

Reasoning skills are important in all subjects. Let your child practice by pretending she's an archaeologist—a scientist who uses clues to learn about the past.

Have each family member secretly place three belongings in a paper bag. Exchange bags.



Then, each person opens the bag she received and studies the clues. Take turns guessing who your bag belongs to and what you can tell about that person.

Say your child gets a bag containing a crochet hook, yarn, and a pattern. She might say, "Mom likes to crochet. This must be her bag."

Idea: Choose a storybook character, and have her find items to match it. For instance, she might collect a tiara, a magic wand, and a slipper for a princess from her favorite fairy tale.♥



Q & A

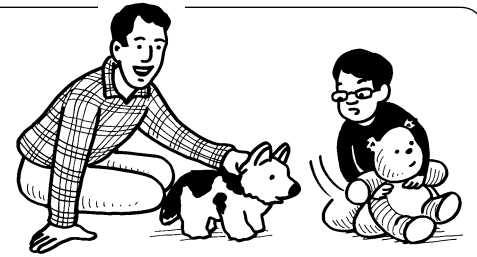
Safe and sound

Q: I want to talk to my son about strangers, but I don't want to scare him. What should I say?

A: It's a good idea to discuss strangers—and to tell him that safety rules apply to everyone, whether he knows the person or not.

Remind your son that he should never go anywhere with someone without your permission. To make the conversation less scary, role-play with stuffed animals, and try to convince his animal to go with yours. Your wolf could say to his bear, "I have a pot of honey for you in my den" or "Please help me rescue a wolf cub." Your child's job is to say "No!" and to immediately find a stuffed animal he trusts.

Let your youngster know that if anyone makes him uncomfortable or asks him to keep a secret that seems bad or scary, he should tell you or another trusted adult right away.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Remember your manners

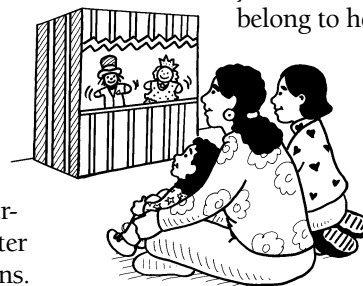
It seemed like whenever my daughter Jess and I went out and she got excited—poof—her manners disappeared. Then I'd end up scolding her, which was no fun for either of us.

One day we went to a puppet show with my friend who has a little girl Jess's age. Before the show, my friend reminded her daughter to sit quietly and to clap afterward. Next, her daughter repeated the instructions.

Sure enough, during the show, she was very polite.

It seemed too easy, but I decided to try this with Jess. The next time we visited her great-aunt, I paused outside and reminded her to say please and thank you and not to touch things that didn't belong to her without asking. I had her repeat the reminders.

It worked! Like most kids, Jess still forgets her manners sometimes. But thanks to that simple strategy, it happens less often, and our outings are more enjoyable.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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