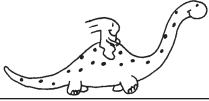


# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2021

## KID BITS



### Comfy school clothes

Your children will be able to concentrate better in school if they're wearing comfortable clothes. For example, it's a good idea to dress in layers that are easy to take off if they get hot. If they're still learning to fasten buttons or snaps, elastic-waist pants may be best. *Tip:* Have them wear sneakers so they can run and play safely at recess.

### Plan ahead for patience

When you head out with your youngster to run errands, let her carry a notebook and crayons. Then if you have to wait, encourage her to draw pictures of things she'd like to do when she gets home (ride her bike, play with action figures). She'll learn to keep herself occupied when she needs to be patient.

### Wash up!

How can you motivate your child to wash his hands for the 20 seconds needed to kill germs? Have him sing the alphabet song while he scrubs. Or boost his creativity and independence by suggesting that he come up with his own 20-second idea. He might recite a tongue twister or nursery rhyme, or even make up a song to sing.

### Worth quoting

"Hugs can do great amounts of good, especially for children."  
*Diana, Princess of Wales*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What are you guaranteed to get for your birthday?

**A:** A whole year older!



## Success in school: A parent's role

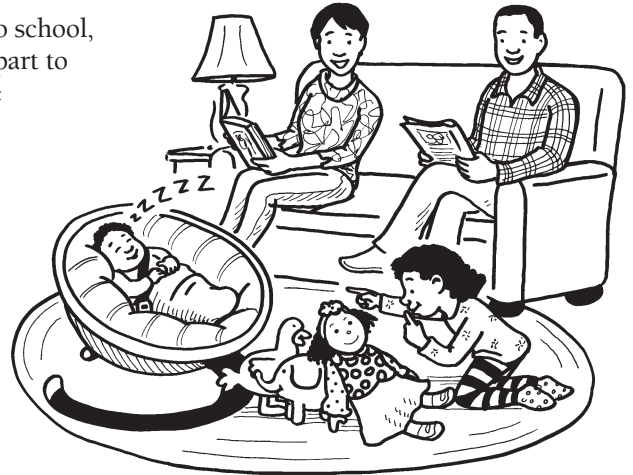
Your little one is headed to school, and you have an important part to play in her success. Here are ways to support her as she grows and learns.

### Share enthusiasm

The more excited you are about school, the more excited your child will be. Each day, invite her to "teach" you something she learned. She might show you how to make "ants on a log" for a snack or name colors around the house. Whatever the lesson, be an enthusiastic "student." Your positive attitude will be contagious!

### Encourage problem solving

Help your youngster think through and solve problems for herself. For instance, she may want to play a noisy game, but the baby is sleeping. Ask, "What could you do instead?" *Examples:* Play a quieter game, wait for the baby to wake up. She'll become more self-reliant and need less help at home and in class.



### Be a listener

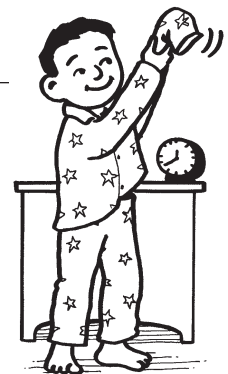
Your child gets her first lessons in listening by talking with you. During conversations, show that she has your full attention. ("Let's put away my phone so I can listen to you.") Acknowledge what she says, and ask questions to show interest. ("I love mac and cheese, too. Which vegetable goes best with it?") She'll see firsthand what a good listener does.♥

## Bedtime routines that work

A peaceful bedtime routine can help your youngster fall asleep faster and get the 10–13 hours of sleep he needs to be ready to learn. Consider these tips.

● **Allow plenty of time.** Rushing through your child's routine may wind him up and make it harder for him to settle down. *Idea:* To avoid protests and delays, give him a 5- or 10-minute heads-up before starting the routine.

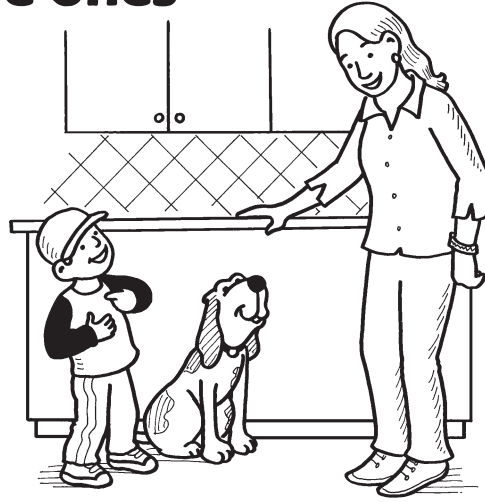
● **Set rituals.** Doing bedtime tasks in the same order creates a predictable routine that signals sleepy time. *Example:* Take a bath, put on pajamas, brush teeth, tuck in stuffed animals, listen to a bedtime story. *Idea:* Together, create a bedtime poster where you list the steps and he illustrates them.♥



# Social skills for little ones

Learning to get along with other children is an important part of school success at this age. Help your youngster develop social skills he'll use all his life with these strategies.

**Practice introductions.** To get your child comfortable meeting new people, practice at home. He can start by introducing himself: "Hi, my name is Marcus." Then, he could add a compliment ("I like your dinosaur shirt") or share something he likes to do ("T-ball is my favorite sport. What's yours?").



*Idea:* Encourage him to pretend his toys are introducing themselves. ("Hello, I'm Hops-a-Lot the bunny. I like jumping games.")

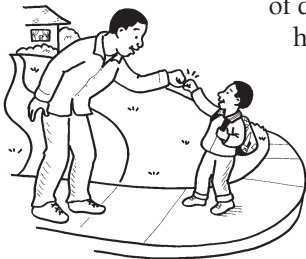
**Make a friendship book.** Have your little one create a "how-to" guide to friendship. Together, think of important things that friends do, like take turns and share toys. Help him write each idea on a separate sheet of paper, and let him illustrate it. For instance, he might draw himself sharing his favorite toy with a friend. Or he could illustrate friends taking turns while playing a board game. Staple the pages together, and invite him to "read" his guide to you.♥

## Q & A Happier goodbyes

**Q:** My son is clingy and cries when I leave him at school. What can I do?

**A:** While there's no overnight cure for separation anxiety, it's normal at this age and does get better with time. In the meantime, here's a way to help your child cope.

Start by giving him some control over the situation. Together, make a list of different ways he can say goodbye, and let him choose one each day. For example, does he



want fist bumps, snuggly hugs, or three kisses? Then, follow through with his choice, and try to keep your goodbyes short.

Also, remember that your son's teacher is a great resource for handling separation anxiety. Ask her to share tips that have worked for other families in the past.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Scoop up some fine motor fun

Scooping and pouring build the fine motor skills that your child needs for handwriting. Here's how to help her set up and use a "scooping station."

Get a shallow box or bin for a mess-free station. Have your youngster fill it with scooping tools (cups, spoons), small objects to scoop (beads, sprinkles), and containers to fill (bowls, pitcher). Then, suggest these five playful ideas:

1. Spoon sprinkles into a muffin tin to make colorful "muffins."
2. Prop up an empty cardboard tube against one side of the box. Scoop up popcorn kernels, and send them down the "tunnel slide."
3. Count how many scoops of dry beans will fit inside a pitcher.
4. Load up a toy truck with pebbles, and "deliver" them to different containers.
5. Scoop various objects into a bowl, and stir them together to make "soup."♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### School-day memories

When my older daughter started school, I would display her schoolwork on the fridge, then store it in a bin where it was quickly forgotten. By the time my younger daughter began school this year, I had developed a system for both girls that gives them a record of their progress.

First, I gave each child a binder to decorate. As papers

come home, they decide which ones are "keepers" and put those in the binder. If a project is too big to fit, I let them take a photo of it, and they file the picture in the binder.

Once a month or so, we'll look back through their binders to see how much they're learning. Jamie was excited that she's writing her ABCs, and Sarah was proud that she's doing addition. Both girls can't wait to see how much they'll learn this year!♥

