

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

December 2011

Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District

KID BITS



Practice fire safety

Has your little one learned about fire safety at school? Ask him to tell you what he knows. For example, he might explain “stop, drop, and roll.” Practice lying on the floor and rolling over and over. Or walk around your home and ask him to point out two exits from each room.

To tell the truth

Youngsters sometimes fib because they're worried about a parent's reaction. If your child sees you staying calm, she'll be more likely to be honest in the future. Say she knocks over her glass of juice at breakfast and blames her brother. You might say, “Oops. I see your juice on the table. Please clean it up.”

DID YOU KNOW?

Colds, flu, and snow days mean that children miss more school in the winter. You can try to reduce sick days by having your youngster wash her hands regularly, eat well, and get enough sleep. Also, avoid unexcused absences by not letting her stay home just because she wants to or says she's tired.

Worth quoting

“Logic will get you from A to B. Imagination will take you everywhere.”
Albert Einstein

Just for fun

Q: What has arms and legs but no head?

A: A chair!



Reading together

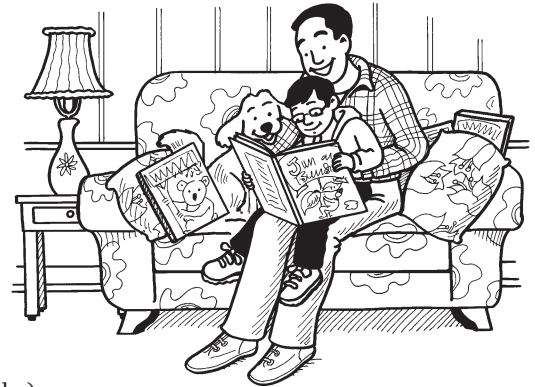
Long before a child can read by himself, he learns many things when an adult reads aloud to him. He hears new vocabulary, builds comprehension skills, and realizes that reading is cozy and fun. Here are some ideas for raising a book lover.

Discover

Introduce your little one to nonfiction. If he likes animals, you might try *Panda Kindergarten* (Joanne Ryder) or *Owney, the Mail-Pouch Pooch* (Mona Kerby). As you read, turn the pages slowly and let him explore them at his own pace—he may ask you what a word means or make comments about the pictures. This will build his vocabulary and help him learn more about the book's topic.

Share

Let your child invite a friend over for story time. Read a book, and then have them do an activity that encourages them to think about the plot. For instance, after hearing *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* (Bill Martin Jr.), they might make “binoculars.” Help each youngster tape two empty toilet paper rolls together



and decorate them. Then, they can look through the binoculars and take turns asking each other, “What do you see?” (“I see a green couch looking at me.”)

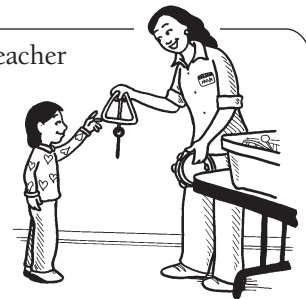
Play

Be playful when you read aloud. Use a different voice for each character, and encourage your child to copy you so he gets a chance to use new words. For example, you might try a gruff voice for a giant or a hissing voice for a snake. Or choose a book such as *Yuck!* (Mick Manning and Brita Granström) that has a repeating word. Each time you see the word “yuck,” stop and let your youngster read it while you both make silly faces.♥

Ways to volunteer

Have you considered being a parent volunteer? The teacher would probably love your help, and your youngster will be excited to know you're involved. Here are some things you might be asked to do:

- If you like to work behind the scenes, you could stuff students' weekly folders, make copies, organize class parties, and do other jobs either at school or at home.
- If you like to work with children, you could be asked to have them dictate stories to you, play math games with small groups, or hand out and collect instruments during music time.
- If you like technology, the teacher might want you to maintain a class home page, get computers ready for children to use (typing passwords, opening programs), or create a parent email list.♥



Respect for others

A child who shows respect for others is more likely to succeed in and out of school. Why? Because teachers, other adults, and peers all get along better with a youngster who treats them with respect. Try these suggestions for encouraging your child to be respectful:

- Together, think about everyday actions that show respect for other people. For instance, whispering in the library is respectful toward people who are reading. And helping to keep the school clean (throwing away trash, not touching walls) shows respect for the custodial staff. *Ideas:* Practice at home by pretending you're at the



a habit by giving her a 10-minute warning. ("Dinner is in 10 minutes. Please finish your game so you'll be ready.")♥

library or another public place, and speak softly. Teach your youngster to clean up after herself so she doesn't create extra work for others.

- It's also respectful not to keep people waiting for you. Try to set an example by having your family be on time for appointments, events, and get-togethers. Help your child make promptness

All kinds of shelters



What do a castle, a tent, and an apartment have in common? They are all shelters, or places where people live. Use these two ideas to help your child learn about shelters that are not like his own home:

1. When you're in the car, have your youngster look for different shelters (house, townhouse, apartment building, mobile home). He can draw a picture of each one down the left side of a sheet of paper. Then, he can make tally marks for each one he sees. What kind of shelter is most common in your area?



2. Browse through books, magazines, and newspapers for pictures of shelters that you don't see every day (tent, log cabin, castle, houseboat). Have your child choose his favorite and build one out of blocks or recycled materials.♥

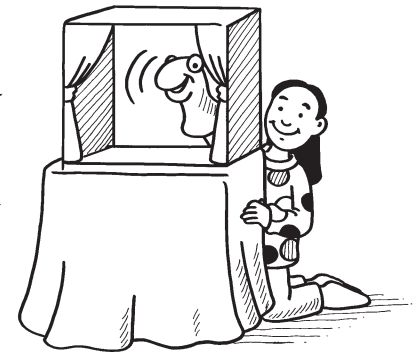
Q & A Free play

Q: During summer vacation, my daughter constantly wanted to watch TV, and I'm worried the same thing will happen over winter break. How can I encourage her to do other things?

A: You can steer your child away from the TV, and keep her school skills sharp, by helping her make a winter break "to do" list. Together, write down her favorite ways to play, such as taking care of dolls, painting, and doing puzzles.

Then, add a few new ideas to the list. She might work on her coordination with activities such as stringing beads, dancing to music, and pretending to be in a marching band. By "teaching" school to her dolls and putting on puppet shows, she can boost her imagination and strengthen skills she's learning in school.

Post the list on the refrigerator. When your youngster asks to watch TV, look over the list together and help her choose something else to do. When she enjoys what she's doing, she might not ask for TV time as often.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Winter trees

This winter, let your youngster learn about science by exploring trees. Try these ideas.

Observe trees. Your child might notice that some trees stay green all winter (evergreen), while others lose their leaves (deciduous). Help her find and draw one of each. Then, ask her what sets them apart

(needles vs. bare branches). *Idea:* Save the drawing and let her check the trees next spring to see how they've changed.

Make bark rubbings. Help your youngster tape a piece of notebook paper to the trunks of two different types of trees. Then, let her lightly rub a crayon over the papers. The pattern of the wood will appear. Have her describe how the trunks are different. Perhaps one has wide ridges and the other has narrow ones.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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