

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Prince Edward County Public Schools  
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## KID BITS



### A good night's sleep

Your preschooler needs lots of zzz's to learn and remember new things. In fact, children this age should get 10–13 hours of sleep a day. Ensure that your youngster gets the rest she requires by setting a consistent bedtime. Then, use calming activities like a bath and a story to help her easily drift off.

### Special attention

Did you know that rewarding or consoling your child with food can teach him that eating is a way to feel good about himself? Instead, give him extra attention. You might celebrate an accomplishment with a victory dance. Or you could soothe away a bad day with a snuggle session.

### Part of the group

Your youngster will be more comfortable doing group projects at school if she is used to doing them out of school, too. Let her have friends over to play card games, or suggest that they put on a puppet show. Or organize an art project for the whole family to work on together.

### Worth quoting

"Wisdom begins in wonder." *Socrates*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What has teeth but no mouth?

**A:** A comb!



## One book, lots of activities

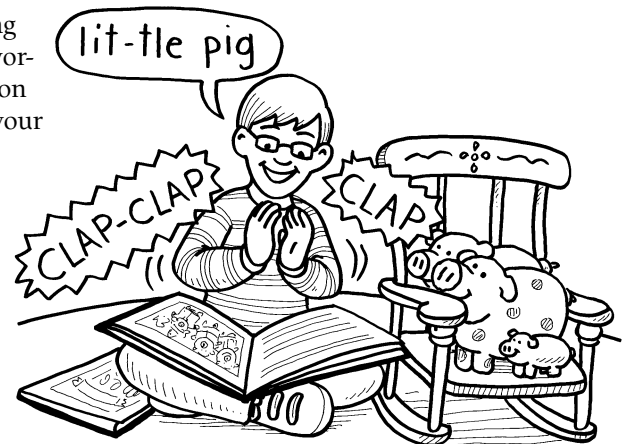
Encourage early reading skills with your child's favorite book! Here are hands-on activities you can add to your daily read-aloud time.

### Story syllables

Breaking words into "chunks" makes them easier to sound out (and later, to spell). Begin building this skill with your youngster by clapping together when you read words or phrases. Clap once for each syllable. For example, "little pig" would be clap-clap, clap. After your child has the hang of it, he might enjoy drumming or marching to the beat of the syllables as you read.

### Slow motion sounds

Here's a fun way to get your youngster to listen for letter sounds within a word. While reading, let him randomly call out, "Speed bump!" Then, you read the next word in slow motion, emphasizing each letter sound. For instance, "Fff-aaah-rrr-mmm." To speed you back



up, your child calls out the word at normal speed: "Farm!"

### I Spy pictures

Play I Spy to help your child pay attention to beginning letter sounds. Open the book to any page, secretly choose an object in the illustration (dog), and say, "I spy, with my little eye, something that starts with D." (*Tip:* Ask him what sound that letter makes. If he can't remember, prompt him by saying other D words.) He scans the page and names the word. Now let him choose a letter sound and picture for you to find!♥

## Many thanks

Thanking people is a way for your little one to practice good manners and make others feel appreciated. Teach her to show gratitude with these ideas:

- When your child receives a gift, have her make a thank-you card. *Idea:* Consider setting a rule that she has to send a card before she uses the present.
- Remind her to thank the "helpers" in her life, such as the school bus driver or the person who cuts her hair.
- Together, bake brownies for her teacher or coach to recognize their hard work.
- Thank your youngster when she's helpful, too. Children love to imitate adults, and she will learn from your example.♥



# Let's unplug!

You probably know that the less time your youngster spends using electronic devices the better. Here are strategies for entertaining her without turning on a screen.

**Think ahead.** For times when you might be tempted to give your child screen time, plan alternatives. While she's riding in a grocery cart, give her a task like finding items on your shopping list. Or when you need



to do things around the house, help her fill large zip-top bags with activities she can enjoy by herself, such as dot-to-dots or finger puppets.

**Make old things feel new.**

Find a few toys she hasn't used in a while, and stash them away in a box in the closet. Then, instead of popping in a video when she's bored, pull out a "forgotten" toy for her to play with.

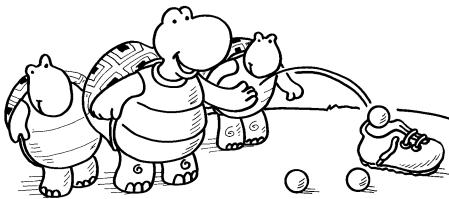
**Create natural alternatives.** Get outdoors and get busy in nature. Not only does nature lack electrical outlets, but you both will be more alert as you explore the woods, a creek, or the backyard together.♥

**PARENT TO PARENT**



## Homemade games

When I was little I loved creating my own games, so I suggested that my sons invent their own games, too. They each chose items from around the house to use in a game. Then, the boys brainstormed ways to play with them.



My son Ian made a game of bouncing Ping-Pong balls into his sneakers and scoring points for each one that landed inside. My younger son Isaac hid his stuffed bear, and we had to find it before a timer went off.

The boys' creativity keeps growing. They've challenged each other to build the tallest tower using towels, boxes and pillows, and they've invented a tabletop hockey game with milk carton caps.

They're learning a lot, too. They negotiate rules, cooperate to create games, and collaborate on instructions. Overall, I'd say homemade games are a win-win at our house!♥

**ACTIVITY CORNER**

## Jobs to grow on

What does your child want to be when she grows up? Get her thinking about all the possibilities with this project where she will learn about the jobs of friends and family members.

**Materials:** paper, crayons, stapler

Encourage her to interview relatives or neighbors about their jobs. She might ask Aunt Sara what she does as a bank teller or find out what her neighbor likes about being a janitor.

After each interview, your youngster could draw a picture of the person at work and dictate or write a sentence or two about the job. *Example:* "Aunt Sara is a bank teller who counts money for people."

Help her collect her drawings and staple them together into a book. Let her "read" it to you and describe what she learned about the different careers. Would she like any of these jobs when she's older?♥



**Q & A** **Parent-teacher conferences**

**Q:** *This is my first parent-teacher conference about my son. What should I expect?*

**A:** Congratulations on getting involved in your child's school life! It's one of the most important things you can do for his education.

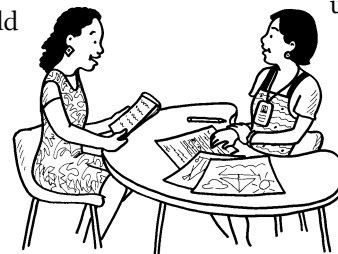
Your son's teacher will share information on how your child learns and plays, how he gets along with others, and where he does well or may need assistance.

Also, be prepared to answer questions from your child's teacher, who has his

best interests at heart and wants to help him succeed. She might ask about his behavior outside of school or how you help him learn.

Finally, this is the perfect time for you to ask questions. Since conference times are usually brief, write down your questions before you meet. That way you'll

use the short meeting to cover the most important items on your list. Then, get ready to be part of the team that cheers on your new student's progress at school!♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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