

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2010

Carver Kindergarten
Barbara Bernal, Principal

KID BITS



Family resolution

Introduce your child to New Year's resolutions by making one as a family. Ask everyone for ideas: read instead of watching TV after dinner, clean the house for 15 minutes each Saturday morning, switch to reusable grocery bags. Then, choose one, and stick with it together.

Progress reports

If your youngster gets a midyear progress report, sit down and talk about it with her. Point out first what she's doing well ("Your teacher says that you complete your work on time"). If she is struggling in an area, suggest ways to help ("Let's practice writing numbers at home").

Wake-up routine

Help your child start his day in a good mood and ready to learn. Try singing him awake in the morning with an upbeat song like "You Are My Sunshine." Or mention something he can look forward to during the day (gym class, playdate).

Worth quoting

"Snowflakes are one of nature's most fragile things, but just look what they can do when they stick together."

Vesta Kelly

Just for fun

Q: What is there more of, the less you see?

A: Darkness.



Keep the learning alive

Help your child get the most out of what she's studying in school by continuing her learning at home. Fit school subjects into her daily activities with these suggestions.

Reading

Your youngster probably has story time at school each day. Ask her to tell you the titles of books that her teacher reads. Then, take her to the library to check them out. At home, suggest that she hold her own story hour. She can use the book's illustrations, along with any words that she remembers or recognizes, to "read" aloud to dolls or stuffed animals.

Science

Turn your sink or bathtub into a science lab so your child can do experiments like she does in school. When you wash dishes or she takes a bath, let her figure out what sinks and what floats. Have her try out various objects, such as a washcloth, a sponge, a rubber duck, and a bowl. *Note:* Always supervise your child around water.

Winter exercise

With a little creativity, your youngster can stay just as active during winter as he does the rest of the year. Try these ideas to keep him fit and healthy:

- Make snow hurdles to jump over. Pack snow into a row of mounds that are about one foot high.
- Enjoy fitness outings together. You might ice-skate at an indoor or outdoor rink or swim at a community pool.
- Exercise at home. Make up your own workout routines. For example, one person does a toe touch, the next person copies him and adds another (a sit-up), and so on. ♥



Math

If your youngster is learning to add numbers, give her plenty of opportunities to practice. When you fold laundry, let her count the number of T-shirts and pants. Then, she can add the numbers together. Have her count the total to check her addition. She can also do this at breakfast (plates + cups) and at play time (farm animals + zoo animals).

Tip: To find out what your child is learning in school, look through her backpack or talk to her teacher. ♥



Help out

When you volunteer at your youngster's school, everyone benefits! The teacher will appreciate an extra pair of hands, and your child will see that his education is important to you. Here are some ways you might volunteer.

- **Decorate.** Hang student artwork in the classroom or hallway. Create bulletin boards and arrange book displays.



- **Help with projects.** Arrange crafts materials on tables, and clean up afterward. Work with students on special tasks, such as writing and illustrating their own books or setting up a class museum.

- **Do paperwork.** Copy worksheets for students and forms for the teacher to send home. Place book club orders.

- **Share talents.** If you enjoy pottery, you might share several of your creations with the class.

If you know American Sign Language, offer to teach children the alphabet and a few basic words (hello, good-bye).♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Name that coin

Learning to identify coins is fun when you and your child play these games. You'll need an assortment of change.

- 1. Coin sort.** Have your youngster look carefully at both sides of each coin. Tell her their names, and then have her sort them into piles (pennies, nickels, dimes, quarters). Which pile is the tallest?

- 2. Textures.** Once she is familiar with the way each coin looks, help her notice how they feel. Next, put different coins in a paper bag. Have her close her eyes, pick one, and try to figure out which it is.



("This one has smooth edges. It must be a nickel.") She can also lay a piece of paper over a coin and rub a pencil or crayon across it to see its texture.

- 3. Guess my coin.** This game will help your child remember the traits of each coin. Take turns hiding one in your hand (say, a quarter) and giving clues to help the other person guess it. ("My coin is silver. It is the biggest coin.")♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A

Gratitude journal

Q: My son Ian complains that he doesn't have a video game system or a big yard like his best friend. How can I teach him to appreciate what he has?

A: Why not help your son start a gratitude journal? He can write or draw things he is thankful for in a notebook. He might do this once a week as part of his bedtime routine.

Start by talking about what you are grateful for, such as your job and your health. Then, ask Ian to come up with something he appreciates. If he can't decide, ask a question to prompt him, such as "What was the best thing that happened to you today?" Give him crayons to draw a picture of his choice (his best friend, playing with his puppy, learning to do a cartwheel). Help him write a few words under his picture.

When your son mentions something he wishes he had, suggest that he take out his journal and read it. With your help, he'll realize that he has a lot to be thankful for.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

My history

My daughter Carla recently had to share something about her own history during show-and-tell. Her kindergarten teacher explained that she wanted the kids to learn that history is the study of the past.

Carla thought it would be fun to share something from Guatemala, where she was born. Her grandfather suggested that she make a Guatemalan flag out of construction paper. She took the flag to school, along with photos of the trip we made to visit her relatives when she was three.

This project helped my daughter become interested in learning more about her past. The next time Carla talked to her grandmother, she asked her what life was like in Guatemala when she was a little girl. Then, she drew a picture of her grandmother wearing brightly colored clothes, with mountains in the background. She plans to share her drawing with her class at the next show-and-tell.♥

