

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2020

Little School of the West

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KID BITS

Practice class rules

Ask your youngster to tell you about rules she follows in school. Together, pick one or two she could work on at home, such as cleaning up after herself or listening without interrupting. Then, let her know when you notice that she follows a rule. It's a win for the teacher and for you when you each encourage your child to meet the same expectations.

My turn, your turn

The next time you play a board game with your youngster, use this idea to help him learn to take turns. Have each player write his name on a card to put on the board when it's his turn. Your child will easily see whose turn it is and remember to wait for his.

Tickle the funny bone

Laughter is a known stress reliever, and it can help you and your child reconnect after a long day. You might tell jokes during dinner, do a silly dance when she plays outdoors, or read a bedtime story in a pirate voice, for instance.

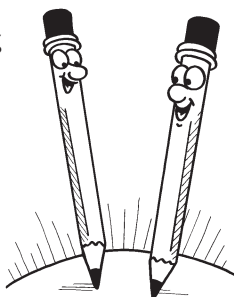
Worth quoting

"Make each day your masterpiece."
John Wooden

Just for fun

Q: What did one pencil say to the other?

A: You're looking rather sharp!



Bullying: Prevention begins now

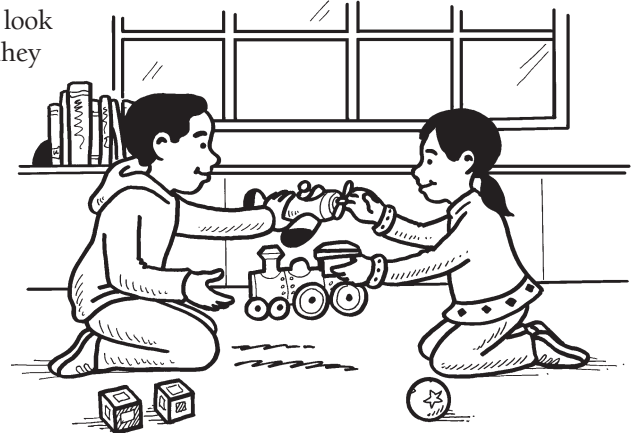
What does bullying behavior look like among little ones? While they may not bully others the same ways older kids do, they can develop habits that lead to more deliberate bullying later. Consider these suggestions to help prevent bullying from the start.

Be gentle

Teach your child peaceful ways to get what he wants or needs. For instance, if he grabs a toy from his sister, have him give it back and think of a better choice. He might suggest trading her for a different toy or playing with something else until she's finished. He'll learn that he can achieve what he wants without being aggressive.

Express yourself

Encourage your youngster to focus on his behavior rather than trying to control how other kids act. Instead of "I won't be your friend if you don't __," he might say, "I want you to __ because __." Try modeling this yourself, and he'll start to pick up on it. *Example:*



"I want you to eat your vegetables because they're good for you" vs. "You can't have dessert if you don't eat your veggies."

Include others

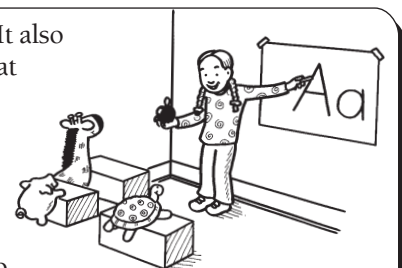
Have your child look out for kids who seem lonely or are left out. He can practice when you're at the park. Point out someone playing alone, and suggest that your youngster invite that child to play. In school, if he sees someone sitting alone or overhears kids saying "You can't play with us," he could ask the classmate to join him. ♥

Let's play school

Playing school is more than just a fun game. It also helps reinforce what your youngster is learning at school. Spark her imagination with these tips.

● **Set up a "classroom."** Your child could create a "classroom" in the corner of her bedroom or the family room. Encourage her to add items she uses at school, like paper, pencils, books, and crayons. She might turn stuffed animals into "students" and hang poster board on the wall as a chalkboard, too.

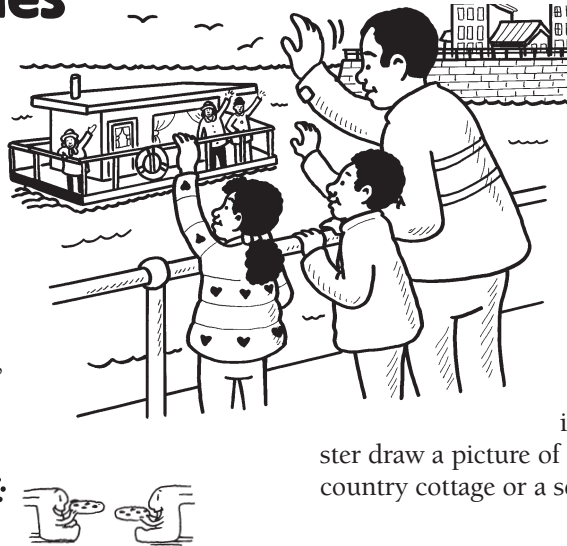
● **Give "lessons."** Take turns being the teacher. Your youngster can teach you activities she enjoys in school—maybe she'll lead you and her stuffed animals in a game of Duck, Duck, Goose. On your turn, you might read aloud to her and have her draw her favorite part of the story on the board. ♥



All kinds of homes

Houses look different around the world—or even in your own neighborhood. Go on these adventures with your youngster to explore where people live so she learns about types of homes.

Near. How many different kinds of homes are in your neighborhood? Take a walk to find out. Your child might see townhomes, mobile homes, apartments, and single-family homes. Talk about how they're similar and



different. For instance, they all have doors, windows, and a roof. But some have many families living inside while others have just one family. Back at home, encourage your youngster to use blocks or craft sticks to create homes for her dolls or toy animals.

Far. Look in magazines or library books, or search online for “kinds of homes.” Maybe your child will see houseboats off the coast of a city, log cabins in a forest, and farmhouses in rural areas. Suggest that your youngster draw a picture of a home she'd like to live in—maybe a country cottage or a seaside house on stilts.♥

PARENT TO PARENT New uses for old toys

While I was cleaning out the basement, I came across toys that my son Martin doesn't play with anymore. I decided to challenge him to be creative and find new ways to play with them.



Martin came up with the idea to take his beach toys out in the snow. He enjoyed using a shovel and a bucket to make a snow castle. Then I pointed out a plastic slide he used as a toddler, and he turned it into a ramp for his toy cars.

Now my son is excited to see toys he hasn't played with in a while, and he's using his imagination as he thinks of more ways to play with them. When he had a friend over recently, I overheard them debating whether to use his old wagon as an ice cream truck or a Lego table!♥

Q & A Special time together

Q: Our daughter was so excited when her baby brother was born. But now she gets upset whenever my husband or I hold him. What can we do?

A: It's normal for older siblings to feel jealous of younger ones. Your baby needs a lot of attention, and your daughter is craving that for herself.

Try setting aside time with her each day, perhaps when her brother is napping or after he goes to bed. Play with her train set, color together, or bake cookies. Also, you might consider making time once a week or so for each parent to do something one-on-one with your daughter. Have a picnic at the park or go to the library's story hour, for instance.

Finally, try to give your daughter a special role. Maybe you'll take a walk and let her push the stroller, or ask her to “babysit” your little one while you pay bills.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Watch a potato plant

Potatoes are easy to grow, making them perfect for observing a plant's parts and learning about its needs. Here's how your child can grow potatoes in water so he sees every step of the process.

1. Let your youngster fill a clear jar about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way with water.
2. Have your child insert toothpicks around the middle of a potato that has begun to sprout.



Then, he should stick one end of the potato into the water so the toothpicks rest on the rim of the jar.

3. Place the potato in a sunny window, and encourage your youngster to draw a picture of it. He can check it every few days and draw new pictures when he observes changes. (Roots will grow down into the water. The potato sprouts will get bigger, and leaves will grow.)

Note: Change the water whenever it gets cloudy.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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