

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2013

Arroyo Grande United Methodist Children's Center
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KID BITS



Sense of humor

Knock-knock jokes let your youngster take part in the joke-telling action. Tell her a few of your favorites, or look for some online. Then, encourage her to make up her own. She'll discover how much fun language can be while you laugh together.

School hours

If your child will switch from half- to full-day school in the fall, you can use summer to help him prepare. Throughout the day, point to the clock, and talk about different times. *Examples:* "It's 11:30. That's probably when you'll eat lunch in school," or "It's 3:30. That's what time you'll get home."

Frozen first aid

Summertime activities can lead to the occasional scraped knee. Have your youngster make a "boo-boo cloth." She can place a clean, damp washcloth in a plastic zipper bag and store it in the freezer. The cold cloth will soothe the sting and help her bounce back and keep playing.

Worth quoting

"To see the summer sky is poetry."
Emily Dickinson

Just for fun

Q: What is the first thing you do when you jump in a swimming pool?

A: Get wet!



All-day summer learning

Keep the learning going all summer! Here are ways to fit learning opportunities into your child's daily routine.

Riding in the car

Let your youngster be the "tour guide" when you drive around town or go on a trip. He can point out places and describe them. ("Now we're driving over a bridge. We take the bridge to cross the river.")

He'll become more observant as he notices details, and he'll practice speaking and using descriptive language.

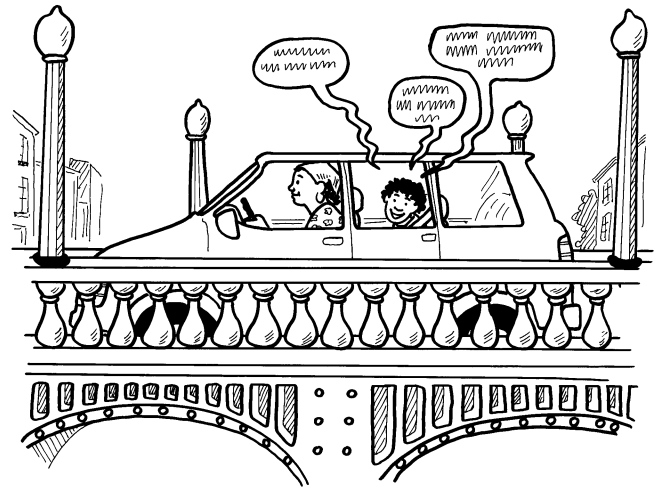
Taking a bath

Playing with shapes and patterns strengthens early math skills. In the bathtub, your child can use washable markers to draw shapes on the sides of the tub. Or cut sheets of colored craft foam into different shapes (circles, squares, triangles). Have him dip the shapes in the water and

stick them on the tub walls to make patterns and pictures.

Going to bed

Try this twist on story time. Ask your youngster to "read" a wordless picture book to you. (Your librarian can help you find one.) Or your child can invent a new story to go with the pictures in a book that has words. Using illustrations to make up stories and read books will boost his reading comprehension. ♥



Tame the TV

It might be tempting for your youngster to spend more time in front of the TV during the summer. But instead of turning on the tube, try these suggestions:

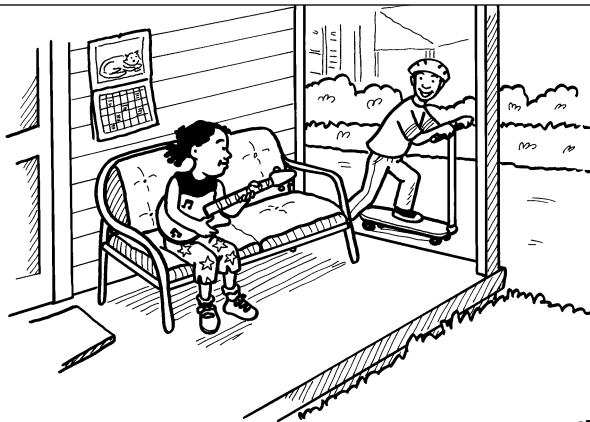
- Ask her to draw pictures of "unplugged" activities (play a board game, put on a puppet show, paint a mural) and glue them on poster board. She can lay the poster on the floor and toss a penny onto it to decide what to do.
- Have an "outdoors only" day. Stay outside all day—where the TV is out of sight. Your child might play with toys on a patio table, or she could take a nature walk and share a picnic lunch with you.
- Take turns hosting play dates with friends or cousins. Let your youngster plan a game or craft when it's her turn to host. ♥



Getting along with siblings

“She’s touching me!” “He touched me first!” Too much togetherness can lead to bickering between siblings. Cut down on squabbles with ideas like these.

Get their input. Point out that summer will be more fun if they get along. Then, brainstorm ways to make that happen. For instance, they might agree not to take each other’s special toys, like a particular doll or stuffed animal.



Create a schedule for shared toys. Avoid arguments about whose turn it is to play the toy guitar or ride the scooter. Your youngsters can write their names or initials on alternating days on the calendar. The one whose initials appear on a given day gets the first pick.

Make sure they have some time apart each day. Some-

times, planning separate activities for your children is the easiest way to keep the peace. They might play in separate rooms or with different toys for a while.

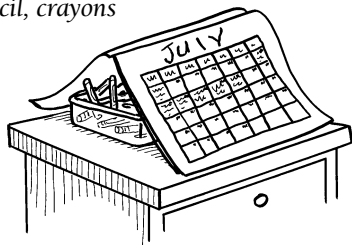
Tip: When your youngsters do argue, stay out of it if possible. As long as they aren’t hurting each other, give them time to work things out on their own so they learn to resolve conflicts.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Calendar journal

Encourage your child to practice writing by filling a calendar with short, sweet memories of summer.

Materials: white drawing paper, ruler, pencil, crayons



1. For each calendar page (June, July, August), your youngster can draw a grid with 7 columns and 6 rows. Help him write a day of the week at the top of each column and number the boxes with the dates.

2. Each night before bed, let your child write a memory in that day’s square. *Example:* “Today we played in the sandbox at the park.” Prompt him if he seems stuck: “Where did we go?” “What did we see?” Have him decorate the squares with drawings, stickers, and stamps.

3. At the end of the summer, read his calendar together, and enjoy the memories.♥



Q & A

A late bloomer?

Q: My daughter seems to have more trouble with schoolwork than other kids her age. I’m worried she may be falling behind. What should I do?

A: First, remember that every child learns at her own pace. To find out if your daughter is on track, schedule an end-of-year meeting with her teacher to discuss your concerns.

During the conference, see if the teacher is worried about your youngster’s progress. Also, talk about areas where you notice her struggling, and ask for ways you could help her at home. For example, if she has a hard time writing numbers, the teacher might suggest simple games to help her form them correctly.

If the teacher thinks your daughter needs extra help, she can tell you about resources that are available.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

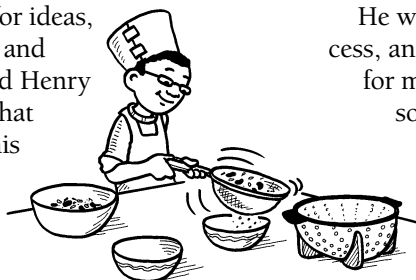
Problem-solving fun

My son’s class recently made paper “thinking caps” to wear during problem-solving activities. Henry liked his hat so much that he wanted to wear it and solve problems at home.

While we were looking for ideas, my older daughter came in and noticed the hat. She showed Henry a problem-solving activity that she remembered doing at his age. She helped him mix beans, rice, and salt in a bowl. Then, she got a colander, a strainer, and

two more bowls, and asked her brother to separate the three foods. It took a few tries, but Henry eventually figured out that the salt would go through the strainer and the rice would go through the colander.

He was proud of his success, and he keeps asking for more problems to solve. Now when we run into a dilemma, we ask Henry to put on his thinking cap and help us figure it out!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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