

Badlands Head Start: PRENATAL TO FIVE



January/February 2017 Newsletter

Upcoming Dates

January 16th	HOLIDAY-No Centers
January 18th	Policy Council Meeting
January 19th	TREC Board Meeting
February 15th	Policy Council Meeting
February 20th	HOLIDAY-No Centers
February 23rd	TREC Board Meeting

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Activity Idea - Snow Fort

For ages: 42-48 months

Activity: When the snow begins to melt it's time to build a snow fort. Bundle up to ensure you and your child stay dry and warm.



Find some plastic buckets to use as snow molds to make snow blocks. The buckets need to be a size you and your child can fill and pack with snow.

Encourage your child to use his or her imagination and problem-solving skills to decide how big the snow fort should be. Begin packing the snow in the buckets and carry them to the location of your fort. Turn the snow-filled buckets upside down and tap the top and sides of the buckets to help the snow blocks slip out of the bucket.

Continue to fill and dump until the foundation or first row of blocks is completed. Make a second level of snow blocks and put them on top of your first row. When you and your child reach the desired height of snow with your blocks, the fort is complete. Now it's time to play in the fort with your child.

What your child is doing:

Snow play is an excellent time for you and your child to bond. Many opportunities exist for you and your children to have fun and learn about nature and the outdoors.



Your child is learning about science as he or she changes the shape of the snow when packing it in the bucket. Your child will see how the shape of the snow can change and remain in the form you create.

Gross motor development occurs as your child carries the bucket of snow. Gross motor development refers to your child's large muscle development. It may be difficult for your child to carry a bucket of snow through snow. Your child will learn how to maneuver through the snow and maintain balance while carrying the bucket and walking with big steps.

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Fathers are Important—For Real!

Submitted by: Wanda Dunn, Family and Community Partnership Specialist

Fathers play a key role in the development of their children and creating a caring family life. Interested individuals, especially fathers, will benefit from this overview of the characteristics of fathers who are supportive and contribute positive influences to their families. Included is information about how fathers influence their child's development, serve as role models to their children, are partners in parenting with the mothers of their children, need community involvement to succeed as parents, and play many roles and benefit from different experiences.

The following information is provided courtesy of the Texas Cooperative Extension, The Texas A&M University System.



Fathers are essential to the healthy growth and development of their children.

Dads bring a unique perspective to the family and lives of their children.

Mothers and fathers can love their children by supporting each other as parents.

Fathers have a powerful influence on the healthy development of their daughters and their sons.



- Babies can distinguish their father's voice from the voice of a stranger by the age of four weeks.
- School-aged children show significant gains in intellectual development when their fathers are involved with them as infants.
- Involved fathers enrich their daughter's and son's self image.
- Children who have involved fathers show more sense of humor, longer attention spans, and more eagerness for learning.
- Father involvement helps teens to develop a strong sense of who they are and increases their ability to resist peer pressure.

Dads are role models who teach their children to be strong, flexible adults.

- Fathers teach sex roles: they are generally more physically active with their sons and more protective of their daughters.
- Fathers often think “out of the box” and offer alternative strategies for problem solving.
- Dads tend to offer more physical play than mothers, which increases the physical competency of their young children.
- When fathers model behaviors that are respectful to women, their sons are more likely to see women as human beings rather than “things” to manipulate. But... fathers who abuse their wives, raise sons who are more likely to abuse their wives and children.

Fathers are essential partners who share parenting with the mother of their children.



- Fathers who interact with their newborn children are usually more likely to support their wife in her new role as mother.
- As a partner, dads can provide balance and be a sounding board or a compass for the family.
- Fathers, as an equal parent, can balance the parenting of the mothers through respectful disagreement and healthy support.
- Fathers and mothers can work together to communicate and reach good decisions that benefit their children.
- Both fathers and mothers need support as they grow into being parents.

Fathers are Important—For Real! (Continued)

Submitted by: Wanda Dunn, Family and Community Partnership Specialist



Fathers need commitment from their communities in order to succeed as parents.

- Communities can provide mentors to guide and support fathers.
- Fathers need to be recognized for their contributions to the community.
- Community leaders need to include fathers in decisions that concern their children.
- Children benefit from learning about the contributions of “average fathers.”
- Communities can plan father-child activity days.

Fathers are individuals who are growing and changing with experience and across situations.

- Being a father is only one of many roles that men work to balance.
- To learn their job as a father, men need room for trial and error.
- Fathers who recognize their important contribution to the development of their child express more satisfaction with themselves.
- In a unique way, children expand the range and depth of experiences that fathers have.

Source: T. Berry Brazelton, M.D. (1992). Touchpoints: The Essential References. MA: Perseus Books.

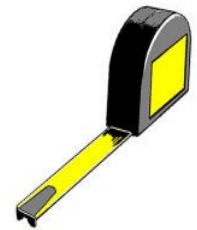
Article from: Early Childhood Learning & Knowledge Center/Office of Head Start

Activity Idea - Measure This

For ages: 36-42 months

Activity: Find your tape measure and help your child measure objects in and around your home. You can also use a yardstick or ruler.

Teach your child how to read the tape measure by reading the measurements and saying the length out loud. As you read them the measurement, show him or her the numbers you are reading. Measure big, small, tall, and short objects with your child. Compare the sizes of each of the objects. Measure and compare the size of your shoes and your child's shoes. Next, ask your child to read the numbers on the tape measure and continue to measure more objects.



What your child is doing: This activity is a great opportunity for you to help expand your child's knowledge of numbers.

At this age your child may be in a stage called “pre-operational.” This means they solve problems based on the way objects look.

For instance, if two rows of beans one row with 12 large beans and the other row with five small beans were the same length, they may say they are the same, not taking into account spacing, size, etc.

Children are in the pre-operational stage until around seven years of age.

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Harding and Perkins Happenings

Today is the official first day of Winter, however the cold snap we felt last week certainly reminded us that Fall was over. With kids out of school and centers closed for the Holiday break, kids may tend to get bored. Here are a few fun, inexpensive, and creative suggestions to beat the cold and boredom, while bonding with your children:

- Invite your child to help you cook or bake (no bake cookies are simple and safe alternatives to using the oven)
- Make cards or paper snowflakes out of construction paper
- Help them reenact a favorite fairy tale
- Build a snowman or go sledding
- Make homemade playdough or gluep
- Build a fort out of sheets and chairs
- Make sock puppets

Ruth Adams — Area Service Manager



Homemade Kool-aid Playdough

Ingredients:

- 3 cups flour
- 3 Tbsp. oil
- 2 cups boiling water
- ½ cup Salt
- 2 pkg Kool-aid

Combine dry ingredients in a large bowl, then add the oil and boiling water. Stir and knead until it makes an elastic consistency. You may have to add more flour depending on the texture.

You can store this in a zip lock bag for weeks.

Homemade Gluep

Borax Solution:

Shake or stir 1/4 cup borax with 1 quart of warm water until the borax dissolves.

Additional Ingredients:

- ¼ cup Glue (Elmers, or any white glue)
- ¼ cup water
- 4 drops of food coloring

Stir glue, water, and food coloring until well mixed. Add ¼ cup of the Borax solution mix until all liquid is absorbed.

This makes a fun and elastic substance that is fun to shape and watch “melt.”

Update from Butte County

Winter is here!! So let me share with you some more activities that you can do with your little ones on a cold and snowy day.

First of all go outside and enjoy the snow. Buddle yourself and your child up and go exploring. You can measure different places in your yard with a ruler. Make it a guessing game: what part of the yard might have more snow and how much. You can also ask your child what might be the reason for the difference in amounts. If it is snowing, go out and take some dark colored paper or a towel and try to catch the snowflakes. Then look at them very carefully. If you are lucky enough to get a few you can compare them. If you find yourself interested in learning more about snowflakes, you can google Wilson Bentley (he spent his whole life studying snowflakes and taking photos of them). There is also a wonderful children's book called Snowflake Bentley that you might like to read. You should be able to find it at our local library.

Listed beneath the Song Corner section of the newsletter are several other activities that can be done inside if it is just too cold to go out.

Michele Kreuzer-Ranken — Butte Co. Area Service Manager



Song Corner

The following songs encourage your child to get up and move. They also help your child to learn the names of various body parts and about directional words such as left and right.

Snowy Pokey

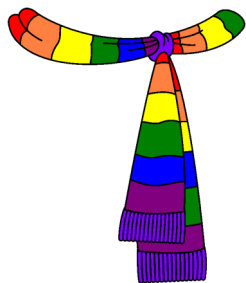
(Sung to the tune of "The Hokey Pokey")

Words

You put your right mitten in,
You put your right mitten out,
You put your right mitten in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the snowy pokey
And you turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about!

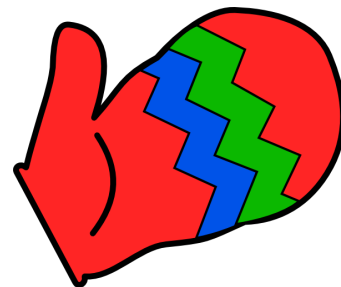
Movement

(Put right hand in front of body)
(Bring right hand back towards body)
(Put right hand in front of body)
(Shake right hand)
(Point index fingers upwards and dance about)
(Turn around in a circle)
(Clap as you say each syllable)



Continue with additional verses
and add motions as appropriate:

You put your left mitten in.
You put your scarf in.
You put your right boot in.
You put your left boot in.
You put your hat in.
You put your snow self in.



Head, Shoulders, Knees and Toes

Note: May repeat song 3 times, getting faster each time. May also choose to repeat song making it slower and then faster.

Words

Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes
Eyes and ears and a mouth and a nose,
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
Knees and toes.

Movement

(Touch each body part as named)

(Touch each body part as named)



Fishing

Words

Have you ever gone fishing on a bright and sunny day?
When all the little fish are swimming in and out the bay?
With their hands in their pockets,
And their pockets in their pants,
All the fishes do the hoochy koochy dance.

Movement

(Reel fishing rod and cast motions)
(Hands together to swim like fish)
(Show hands, place in front pockets)
(Place hands on front pockets)
(Dance with hands and arms in the air)



Song Corner (Continued)

A Great Big Elephant

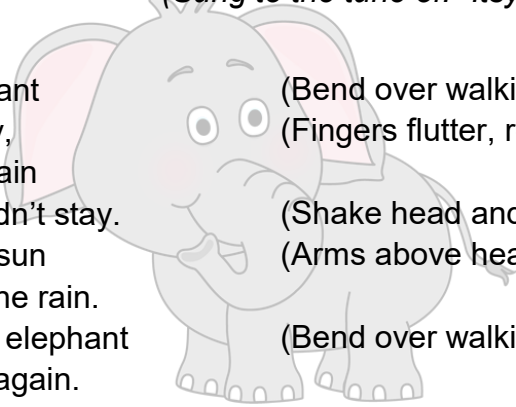
(Sung to the tune of: "Itsy Bitsy Spider")

Words

A great big elephant
Went out one day,
Down came the rain
And then he couldn't stay.
But up came the sun
And dried up all the rain.
And the great big elephant
Went out to play again.

Movement

(Bend over walking and swing arms for the elephant's trunk)
(Fingers flutter, representing rain falling to the ground)
(Shake head and shrug)
(Arms above head forming a circle for the sun)
(Bend over walking and swing arms for the elephant's trunk)



Activity Idea - Snow Scape

Materials:

- ♦ Clean snow
- ♦ Tray
- ♦ Towel
- ♦ Food coloring



What to do: Collect some clean snow or make it by crushing ice cubes. Place a cup of snow on the tray and let your child explore the snow. You can use a few drops of food coloring to tint the snow. Add a few favorite toys and let your child explore! The towel is for clean up as the snow melts.

This activity addresses fine motor development, cognitive skills and the properties of snow (science).

Activity Idea - Taste and Tell

For all those picky eaters out there, try this taste test game.

Materials:

- ♦ Variety of your child's favorite foods and some new ones to try. Keep the foods similar in texture. Don't use foods that you know your child hates.
- ♦ Bowls
- ♦ Spoons
- ♦ Blindfold

Place the food in individual bowls, and set the bowls in a row on the table. Give your child a spoon. Then point out all the foods and tell them you are going to play a game. Have them close their eyes or use the blindfold. Fill the spoon with one of the foods, have them taste it, and guess which one they tried. Do this until they have tasted all the foods. Then you can talk about the different foods.

This activity addresses language skills, classification skills, exploration, and risk taking.



Activity Idea - Candle Smells

This activity you can do at home or while at a store.

Have your child smell all the different aromas and see how many they can identify.

Make a list of the different smells. Try to find other items that have the same smell. Cinnamon for example is found in foods, candles and candies.

This activity addresses language skills, classification skills, and exploration.



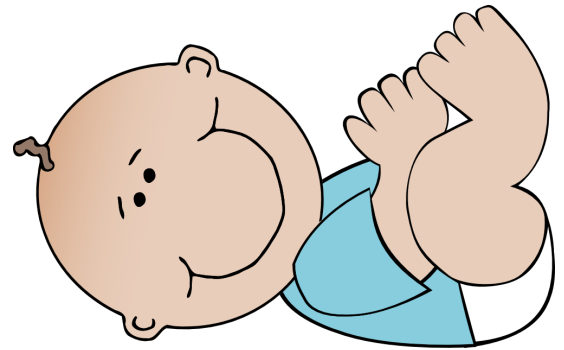
Message from Melissa

Young children have a lot of energy and are still working on developing their large muscle coordination skills. They need to engage in activities that can help them work out some of that energy and to practice newly gained skills. It is particularly important to provide these types of activities during long, cold winter months when children may be spending more times indoors. Here are some fun activities you and your child can do together that will exercise your child's body as well as your child's mind. Enjoy!

Infants

Kicking

Put your baby on her back. Hold her legs at the ankles and bend them at her knees. Straighten her legs, one at a time, repeat this kicking motion several times. Next, bring the two legs together and make the kicking motion together. You can sign a song while you do this exercise with your baby as it will make it more fun and engaging for her. By doing this activity, you are helping to strengthen your baby's muscle and increase her coordination skills.



Rolling

Lay your baby next to you on a soft surface, such as the bed or on a soft blanket on the floor. Pick out two colorful toys that she will enjoy looking at. Put one of the toys on each side of your baby. Tell your baby that it's time to roll! Gently roll her over to one side so that she can look at the toy, reach for it and respond to it. After several seconds, tell her it's time to roll over onto her other side. Gently roll her over to the other side so she can see the other toy. This activity will help strengthen her core muscles and encourage her to roll from side to side.



Banging Game

Babies love to bang on items. It helps them to develop control over the muscles in the hands and arms. Put your baby in her high chair and give her a wooden spoon. She will probably immediately start tapping with it. Take a wooden spoon and tap along with her, singing "Tap, tap, tap!" This game will also help her develop her language skills in addition to her motor coordination.

Message from Melissa (Continued)

Toddlers and Preschoolers

Simon Says

This is a classic game that can be played anytime and anywhere! It is a great way for your child to learn to follow simple directions, build his or her vocabulary and to exert some energy. Simply say "Simon Says" for your preschooler to do a motion. For example, "Simon Says touch your nose." Your child should follow along by doing only the motions that were preceded by "Simon Says." You can make this game a little easier by just saying "Simon Says" prior to all motions and then work up to removing the phrase to assist your child in learning to follow directions. For older preschoolers, add in numbers and words such as left and right to make it more challenging.



Simon says: "Put your left arm up!"

Sample "Simon Says" directions:

- Put your hands behind your back
- Tap your head 5 times
- Shake your left foot
- Hop on your right foot 3 times
- Move your arms like a butterfly
- Put your hands on your hips
- March in place
- Jump up and down 4 times
- Touch your left ear with your right hand

Bowling

Creating your own bowling game is very simple! Gather similar sized empty plastic water or soda bottles to use as bowling pins. As few as 2 or 3 bottles can be used or as many as 10 depending on your preference and what is available. Set up the bottles in multiple rows close together. Have your child roll a ball towards the pins to knock them down and then count to see how many fell. The distance between where your child stands and the pins can vary upon the age of your children and can be marked by a piece of tape. Have your child set the fallen pins back up before he or she takes another turn. If you have multiple children, this is a great activity that promotes turn taking.



Make your own Bean Bags

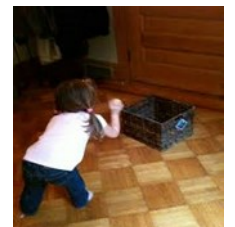
- 1) Put two cups of beans or rice into a tube sock.
- 2) Tie off the end of the sock so the beans/rice do not fall out.
- 3) Optional: Cut off extra material if desired.
- 4) Make the bean bags larger or smaller by increasing or decreasing the amount of beans or rice used.

Bean Bag Fun

Bean bags can be used in a variety of ways, particularly for helping children with throwing skills, both over and underhand. If you do not have bean bags, they can easily be made by putting two cups of beans or rice into a tube sock and then tying off the end of the sock. You can cut off any extra material if so desired. You can make larger or smaller bean bags by increasing or reducing the amount of beans or rice put in the sock.

Bean Bag Basketball

Have your child toss bean bags into a bucket, empty box or laundry basket. If you have multiple children, have them take turns tossing the bean bags. Your child can stand further away from the container or closer to it to make it either more challenging or easier.



Bean Bag Target

Have your child throw bean bags at a target drawn on a wall or the floor. If you have multiple children in the home, they can either take turns or they can throw at the same time. Again, your child can stand further away from the target or closer to change the level of difficulty.

Misty Wilbur
Health/Nutrition/Safety
Specialist



Health Corner

Winter Safety Tips

Whether winter brings severe storms, light dustings or just cold temperatures, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has some valuable tips on how to keep your children safe and warm.

Brianne Sambo
Health/Safety
Coordinator

Dressing for winter

- Dress children in several layers of clothing. If they get too warm, they can remove one layer at a time.
- Always remove children's wet clothing and boots immediately.
- Make sure children wear a hat because most body heat is lost through the head.
- Have children keep their ears covered at all times to prevent frostbite.
- Have children wear mittens instead of gloves.
- Dress children in warm, waterproof boots that are roomy enough to wiggle their toes around.

Winter Health

- If your child suffers from winter nosebleeds, try using a cold air humidifier in the child's room at night. Saline nose drops or petrolatum jelly may help keep nasal tissues moist. If bleeding is severe or recurrent, consult your pediatrician.
- Many pediatricians feel that bathing two or three times a week is enough for an infant's first year. More frequent baths may dry out the skin, especially during the winter.
- Cold weather does not cause colds or flu. But the viruses that cause colds and flu tend to be more common in the winter, when children are in school and are in closer contact with each other. Frequent hand washing and teaching your child to sneeze or cough into the bend of her elbow may help reduce the spread of colds and flu.
- Children 6 months of age and up should get the influenza vaccine to reduce their risk of catching the flu. It's not too late to get the vaccine! Around 80% of all influenza illness generally occurs in January, February, and March.

Easy Hot Cocoa Recipe

Total Time: 5 minutes
Servings: 2

Ingredients:

2 cups milk
2 Tbsp cocoa powder
2 Tbsp honey or maple syrup
1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

1. Warm the milk in a small saucepan, then whisk in the cocoa powder, honey, and vanilla extract. Whisk well to remove any lumps from the cocoa.
2. Optional: place in your blender (make sure the cocoa isn't too hot - you don't want to get burned) and blend until frothy.
3. Serve warm.

Your Child's Mental Health

A New Year!

I thought a lot about what to write for the first newsletter of the New Year. When it comes to mental health, children, parents and families, there's so much we could always talk about! I thought it might be a good time to visit about New Year's resolutions. Sometimes we think of New Year's Resolutions in such big ways! It's understandable, as it's the time of year we reevaluate our lives and take inventory. We think about what we like about the past year and what we want to be different. Yet, thinking too big can often be a set up for a lot of us. Let's face it, change is difficult. It takes a lot of commitment and hard work. Starting small is sometimes the key to doing something differently and can often trigger and jump start the process of change. I think as parents we can be overly critical of ourselves and often think of what we'd like to change in our families in often too big of ways. Sometimes this can seem overwhelming and hopeless. As parents we are the leaders and role models of our families. It's easier to focus on our children's behaviors, anger and negativity without looking at ourselves. It's wise to look at ourselves when our family is struggling. Often it takes only one person in a family to change and do something differently to start a chain of reaction in our children and those we live with.

How about a New Year's resolution to do something small but significant as a parent or family? Something small that would help us to build a closer relationship with our children? What can we accept responsibility for and commit to changing over the course of the New Year? What if we make a decision to yell less, eat supper together at least once a week, one evening with no electronics and television? Perhaps it's making a conscious effort to be a better listener or simply playing with them for 10 minutes each night. Oh the ideas are endless...

The truth of the matter is, we cannot ask our children to work on changing certain behaviors if we ourselves are stuck in negative and unhelpful habits. Having an open and honest look at our own parenting and identifying what we've been doing well and what we can work on is great role modeling for our children! I urge all of us as parents to take an honest look. Come on, let's commit to making our family just a little bit stronger this year!

Ideas for New Year's Family Resolutions

Introducing one new healthy food to yourself and family 1x a week.

Praise them and yourself for the courage to try something different and new! Have everyone clap for each other as they take their first bite.

Exercising one night a week as a family. Go to the local gym and play ball, play hide and seek in your house, put some music on and dance and just get silly together!

Eating dinner one evening during the week together. Give your children jobs to set the table, let them make it fancy with a candle or tablecloth if they'd like. Let them serve you and pretend they're your waitress or waiter. Make it fun!

Less yelling. Are you yelling from room to room at each other? Is the television too loud? Too many electronics on at once? Look at the overall climate of your house.

Less negativity. Post a bulletin board in your house and write positive quotes or put up happy pictures on it that your child draws.



One night with no electronics. This includes parents too! Play a game of hide and seek, draw, or read a book with your child.

More playtime with your children. Ten minutes a night can make a big difference! Let them take the lead and pick whatever they like.

Increased socialization. Get together with friends and other families once a month. Have a potluck dinner where friends visit and children play.



Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2017

Badlands Head Start: Prenatal to Five

KID BITS



(Re)tell me a story

Listening to stories and then retelling them gets your youngster ready to read. After you finish reading her a book, invite your child to tell you the story in her own words. She'll improve her listening comprehension and work on vocabulary and oral language skills as she chooses what to say.

Try new foods

Most children love to try free samples at the grocery store. Why not have a nutritious taste test at home? Cut fruit, vegetables, and cheese into bite-sized pieces, spear them on toothpicks, and offer the "samples" to your little one. He'll enjoy the novelty and could discover new healthy foods he likes.

Volunteer from home

If you work during school hours or are home with a baby, you can still donate your time to help your child's class. Ask the teacher for tasks to do from home, like getting crafts ready or making phone calls to organize class parties. Your youngster will feel good to know that you're a "class helper."

Worth quoting

"How much good inside a day?
Depends how good you live 'em.
How much love inside a friend?
Depends how much you give 'em."
Shel Silverstein

Just for fun

Q: What do snowmen like to do in their free time?

A: Chill out.



Focusing attention

Paying attention is a skill your youngster can develop over time with practice. Try these ideas to give him plenty of opportunities.

Tap interests

Improve your child's concentration by taking advantage of activities he loves. For instance, if he enjoys snapping together tracks for his toy train, suggest a shape or size to make, and let him work on building it.

Join in

Nothing will make your youngster want to stay with an activity quite like having you play, too. Find things to do together that require close attention. You could try concentration-building games like Red Light Green Light and Simon Says. Or pretend to be mimes, and copy each other's moves.

Avoid interruptions

While your child is busy with a task, such as sorting his blocks by color, try not to interrupt him. Allowing him to stay focused will help him build his attention span himself.



Try another

When your little one begins to lose interest in an activity, encourage him to do "one more" before he stops—attempt one more basket, try to balance on his bike one more time, put away one more book. Over time, these small increases will add up.

Note: If you're concerned about your youngster's attention span, talk to his teacher. She can tell you if she has noticed any problems.♥

Ways to feel calm

Your child can cope with emotions like anger, anxiety, and frustration by using these calm-down tricks at home or at school.

- **Bear hug.** Maybe she's feeling overwhelmed. Have her wrap her arms around herself and give a squeeze while she slowly counts to five.
- **Pep talk.** Together, think of a positive message she can repeat to herself when she feels anxious. *Example:* "I've got this."
- **Deep breath.** Anger rising? Ask your youngster to inhale deeply and then slowly and gently blow the biggest imaginary bubble possible.
- **"Noodle bones."** To help her relax, try this funny technique. Get her to close her eyes and pretend that all her bones are wiggly noodles.♥



New year, new expectations

Did you know that working toward a goal helps your child create higher expectations for herself—and meet them? Let her get the new year rolling with these steps.

1. Encourage your youngster to choose a goal to work on, like making a paper airplane or putting away her clean clothes. *Tip:* Have her pick something that is slightly difficult, but not impossible,



for her to do. Unrealistic goals may cause her to lose motivation.

2. While your child is learning, offer to be her assistant. You might do the tiny folds on her airplane after she does the bigger ones, for example. Or just offer to go to the park together for a few practice flights.

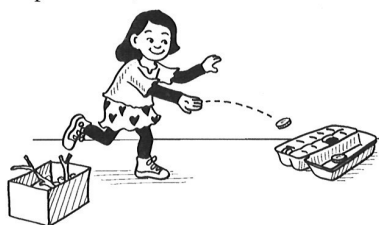
3. Praise your little one's efforts instead of her results. For instance, you could say, "You're working so hard to make those paper airplanes. Nice job!" She'll feel good about trying her hardest.

4. Once she meets the goal, help her pick out a new one to accomplish.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Time to tinker

Sometimes the best toys aren't toys at all. Playing with "loose parts" invites your youngster to use her imagination, to experiment, to reason—and to learn!



First, help your child gather everyday items from indoors and outdoors like bottle caps, ribbons, checkers, paper clips, pinecones, twigs, feathers, leaves, and pipe cleaners. Then, she might:

- ✓ Toss paper clips or bottle caps into an egg carton. Count how many of each are in one section.
- ✓ Arrange checkers, twigs, and pipe cleaners to make letters or numbers.
- ✓ Make a pile of pieces with names that start with *p*: pebbles, paper plates, pencils.
- ✓ Design a creature with a pinecone, feathers, ribbons, and leaves.

Have your youngster collect new materials to keep things interesting.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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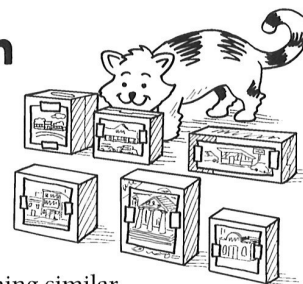
PARENT TO PARENT

My own little town

During Grandparents' Day at school, my grandson Jayden showed me the geography project his class made. They created a town by gluing pictures of buildings to empty food boxes and arranging them to make streets and neighborhoods.

Jayden loved the project, so I decided to do something similar with him at my house. He cut out pictures of buildings—a hardware store, a supermarket, a post office—from old magazines and taped them on boxes from my recycling bin. If he couldn't find a certain picture, he drew the building on paper and attached that. Jayden arranged his "buildings" into a town on the kitchen floor, and we drove toy cars up and down the "streets."

Now when we go out, it's a game for Jayden to find new buildings to add, such as a city hall or a police station. He's learning a lot about what makes up a city!♥



Q & A

Encouraging honesty

Q: Lately, I've been noticing my son stretching the truth. How can I teach him to be honest?

A: It's not uncommon for young children to be dishonest about things they wish were true or to avoid getting into trouble.

When you find your son telling a tall tale, gently remind him about the importance of being truthful. Maybe you overheard him telling a friend about taking a trip

in a helicopter. Later, you could say, "You know you haven't ridden in a helicopter yet, but someday you might. Until then, let's be honest."

If he lied to get out of trouble, help him come clean by sticking to the facts. "I know you might be afraid to tell me you broke the vase, but it was an accident. Let's clean it up."

A positive approach and focusing on the truth rather than getting angry will teach your child it is safe to be honest.♥



Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2017

Badlands Head Start: Prenatal to Five

KID BITS



Letter sounds with a "twist"

Tongue twisters are a great trick for helping children speak clearly and learn letter sounds. Give your youngster's mouth muscles a workout with "She sells seashells by the seashore" or "Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers." Say them together until he memorizes them. Next, take turns trying to say them quickly and clearly.

How to handle disappointment

Oops! Your child wanted to wear her favorite shirt, but it's dirty. Suggest something she could do to move past the disappointment. "I know you're upset about the shirt. Why don't you pick out another cool shirt?" Then, have her make sure the dirty shirt goes in the hamper so it gets washed.

Growing up

Visiting friends, staying with sitters, or spending the night with relatives can make your youngster feel more independent. Visits like these help him adjust to different people and places. And they show him that he can get along okay when he's away from you.

Worth quoting

"Wonder. Go on and wonder."
William Faulkner

Just for fun

Q: I'm full when I'm away, and I'm empty when I'm home. What am I?

A: A suitcase.



Build responsibility with chores

Encourage your child to be responsible from a young age by giving her regular chores around the house. She will feel good pitching in, and her self-esteem will grow.

Offer reasons

Remember that your youngster's idea of how to complete a chore may look different from yours. Try not to be upset if she crams her toys under her bed to "clean" her room. Instead, gently let her know that if she puts them away where they belong, it will be easier to find what she wants at playtime.

Show the way

Give your child "on-the-job training" to help her feel successful with new chores. First, show her how to do each step of the task. Say she's learning to water the houseplants. You might demonstrate how to fill the watering can, sprinkle each plant slowly, and wipe up



drips with a towel. Do the new chore together the first few times until she gets the hang of it. Then, let her fly solo.

Focus on the good

Boost your youngster's sense of accomplishment and nurture a "can-do" attitude by pointing out the parts she got right before correcting a mistake. Rather than saying, "Oh no, you spilled the salad," try, "Thanks for helping set out the food for dinner. You put the salad in just the right spot. Now, let's clean up what spilled."♥

Playing to learn

Play is more than just fun—it has brain-boosting powers! Here are tips for using play to enrich your youngster's learning.

Talk while you play. Encourage your little one to pretend he's a piano teacher, a doctor, or anything else that strikes his fancy. You can be the student or the patient and pose questions like "How should I work on this song?" He'll practice vocabulary as he answers.

Do a project. Ask your youngster to make something with you. He will work on planning and decision making as you paint a mural, create a puzzle, or build a bird feeder. Let him decide which colors to use, the type of puzzle to make, or what shape the bird feeder should be.♥



Hunt for hearts

A heart-inspired scavenger hunt is a “love-ly” way to give your child practice in writing, reading, and following directions. Follow these steps.

1. Both of you choose a different color of construction paper. Yours might be pink and his red, for example. Help him draw and cut out three hearts from each color of paper.



2. Ask him to write notes on each of your hearts while you write messages on his. (“I love being with you!” “You are my sunshine.”) If he’s not writing yet, he could dictate his words to you.

3. Let him hide his messages in one room, while you hide yours in another. Or hide them all outside.

4. Now go on your hunt!

Give directions as your youngster searches for his hearts. Examples: “Take two steps to the left.” “Turn right and look down.” After he finds his, he can give you directions to locate yours.

Idea: Once you have found all the hearts, snuggle up and read your messages aloud to each other.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Shape “matcharoo”

Explore geometry by awakening your youngster to the 3-D shapes all around her. Try these ideas.

Flat or solid?

Start by helping her see the difference between 2-D shapes and 3-D shapes. Have her cut a circle from paper. How is it different from a soup can, which is also circular? She will notice that the circle is flat, while the soup can is solid.



Make a match

Next, play a game. One of you says, “Doodle-do, matcharoo!” and names an object that matches a 3-D shape like a sphere, cube, cone, or pyramid. Then, the other person has to think of another item in that shape. For instance, your child says, “Doodle-do, matcharoo! I have a Ping-Pong ball!” You could match it by saying “orange” because they are both spheres. Take turns coming up with more 3-D items, such as a tissue box and an ottoman for a cube, or a soccer cone and an ice cream cone for a cone.♥

Q & A

Talking about disabilities

Q: One of my daughter’s schoolmates uses a wheelchair, and my child doesn’t seem to know how to act around her. What should I do?

A: Try to help your daughter understand that everyone is different—and also alike. For example, maybe your youngster needs help learning to count. This child needs help getting around, so she uses a wheelchair. Then, ask your daughter what she and the girl might have in common. Perhaps they both like to read books, tell jokes, or watch baseball.

Encourage her to approach the girl at recess, tell something about herself, and then ask a question. “Hi, I’m Flori. I love watching baseball. What do you like to do?” Perhaps they’ll play a game of catch or find something else they can do together.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Little getaways

My wife and I work many hours to pay the bills, and sometimes it seems like we have no downtime for family. So my son Oliver helped us invent Getaway Days.

Once a month, we put a Getaway Day on the calendar for the weekend. We treat it like a mini vacation. The only rule is to “get away” from the house and try something new together. Once

we explored a new library in a neighboring town. Another time we wandered around a local nature preserve.

Our trips are exposing Oliver to interesting things, such as the local history section in the library and the various kinds of plants and birds in our area. But the best part is that we’re connecting and making memories.♥



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