

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

February 2016



Gresham Heights Learning Center
Gene Ann Shepherd, Executive Director

KID BITS

Involved at school

Volunteer in your youngster's class from time to time, if possible. Her teacher might appreciate help with snack time or need extra hands to assist with an art project. And you'll show your child that you think her school is important because it's worth your time!

Pass on the fun

Encourage your youngster to show generosity by having him choose a few of his games, toys, or books to donate. Discuss places you could drop them off together, like a homeless shelter or church thrift shop. Then, let him use crayons to decorate a bag or cardboard box. He can place the items inside and pass them on for other children to enjoy.

Keep a journal

Ask your child, "What was the best thing that happened today?" Encourage her to save her favorite memories in a journal. Each night before bed, help her write a sentence about her day in a notebook. Or she could draw a picture and dictate a caption to you. She'll practice organizing her thoughts and writing.

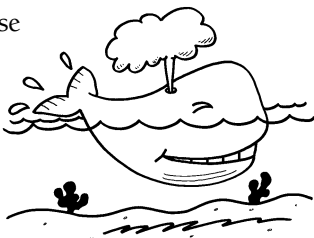
Worth quoting

"Wherever you go, go with all your heart." *Confucius*

Just for fun

Q: Why do whales live in salt water?

A: Because pepper makes them sneeze.



A loving family

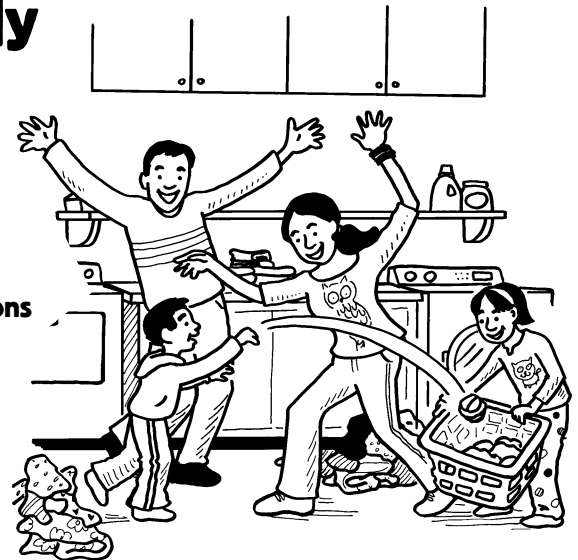
What do you get when you talk, laugh, and spend meaningful time with your child? A strong family connection that makes him more resilient and confident at home and in school. Consider these tips.

Communication creates connections

Taking the time now to chat, giggle, and dream together paves the way for better communication when your youngster is older. Try Saturday-morning snuggle sessions, or go for a walk-and-talk after dinner each night. The topics are less important than the time you spend talking and listening. Your child will learn that his thoughts and opinions matter to you.

Traditions strengthen relationships

Start rituals that feel natural for your family. One family might have a weekly craft night, while another may eat breakfast for dinner once a month. When you hit upon something that works, plan to do it again. Repeat it on a regular basis and—presto!—a new tradition is born that gives your youngster a sense of family.



Moments make memories

When hectic schedules leave you short on time, use small everyday moments to show your child you love him. That impromptu game of sock basketball while sorting laundry or the "serious" discussion about superheroes while shampooing his hair give you a chance to interact with each other beyond the chores. Plus, you'll create happy memories that make your youngster feel special and included. ♥

Rev up your motor... skills!

Every time your youngster races you to the car or climbs the stairs, she's developing large motor skills. Encourage her to improve her coordination and strength with activities like these:

- Take turns moving like different animals and guessing what others are pretending to be.
- Use a hockey stick to sweep balls into an empty trash can turned on its side.
- Make a path of paper plate stepping-stones, and use them to cross the room.
- Chase bubbles, popping them along the way.
- Bat a balloon back and forth to see how long you can keep it in the air.
- Stretch out a jump rope on the ground, and walk along it like on a tightrope.

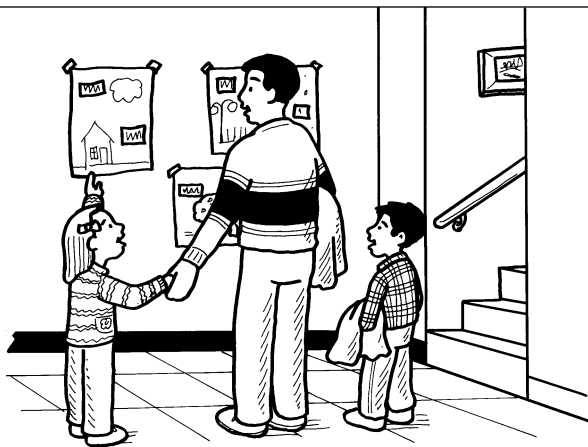
Note: These activities are especially helpful for children with gross-motor delays. ♥



A house full of (printed) words

“I see ‘stop!’” “That says ‘exit!’” Even if your child isn’t reading yet, she probably recognizes many words she sees frequently. Fill her world with words to give her more opportunities to “read” every day.

Words-I-know poster. Let your youngster clip and save a collection of words she knows from package labels and sale ads, such as *popcorn* or *puppy*. She could glue them into a collage on poster board and add new words as she learns them. Encourage her to read her word poster to you regularly.



Name tags for my things.

Turn a pad of sticky notes into homemade “Hello, my name is...” name tags. Then, use them to label objects in her room (*shelf, bed, door*). She can show her stuffed animals around her room as she reads the words aloud to them.

Art with words. When your child colors or paints, help her label items in her pictures, and hang the pictures in a “gallery” in your home. For example, if she colors a barnyard scene, label her pictures (*barn, pig, fence*). Have her be a museum guide—when you visit, she can read the words that go with her artwork. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT Medicine safety

Recently, I had the pharmacist add grape flavor to my son’s antibiotic to make it taste better. I guess it worked too well, because Kyle wanted more!

Our nurse practitioner told me it’s never too early to start teaching him about drug safety. She suggested I explain to Kyle that taking the right amount of medicine will make him better, but taking too much could make him sicker. She also said to tell him never to take medication unless we say it’s okay.

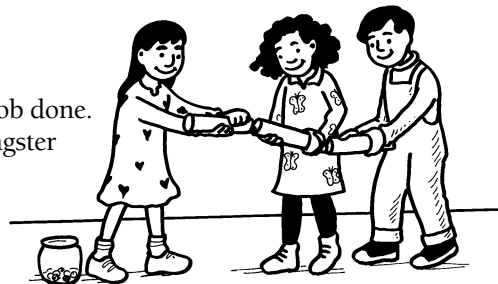


Then, Kyle and I made frowny-face stickers to put on medications that might be mistaken for candy, like his gummy vitamins and my antacid tablets. The stickers remind him that those things are medicine, not treats.

Note: Remember to keep all medicines and vitamins in a locked cabinet and out of your child’s reach. ♥

All together now

Great teams work together to get a job done. These fun activities will give your youngster firsthand experience with teamwork—which will be a big help when she needs to use teamwork in school.



Make a living marble run

Each person holds an empty paper towel or toilet paper tube. One person starts by slipping a marble inside her tube and carefully rolling it into the next person’s tube. That person passes the marble onto the next person, and so on. How many transfers can you make without dropping the marble?

Transfer the blocks

Place 10 blocks on the floor beside a shoebox. The object is to work together to get all the blocks inside the box—but there’s a catch: You may only use the index finger of one hand. See how many different ways you can team up to move the blocks into the box. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Chill out with icy igloos

Building an ice-cube igloo is a “chilly” way for your child to experiment with science and engineering.

Give him a bowl of ice cubes and a cookie sheet to build on. First, he can experiment with stacking ice cubes (they’ll slide off each other). Then, have him sprinkle salt between the cubes (the salt will act as “glue” to make them stick to one another).

You could explain that salt melts the ice a little, but when he adds another cube, the water refreezes to hold them together.

Encourage your youngster to explore engineering by trying different igloo designs. He might build a square igloo, a domed one, or a completely different type.

Tip: Have him wear gloves to keep his fingers from getting too cold. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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