

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2016



Gresham Heights Learning Center
Gene Ann Shepherd, Executive Director

KID BITS

Bedtime chats

After you read a bedtime story to your youngster and tuck him into bed, talk about what will happen tomorrow. *Example:* “You have music in school. When you get home, Grandma will be here because I work late.” Knowing what to expect when he wakes up can help him feel more secure and ready for the day.

Left vs. right

If your child mixes up left and right, try this: Have her hold both hands in front of herself, palms out, and make a right angle with each thumb and index finger (index fingers straight up, thumbs pointing sideways). She can look at the L that’s formed on her left and remember that *left* begins with L—so that’s her left hand.

What is tattling?

Is your youngster *tattling* or *telling*? Explain that he should ask himself whether he’s trying to get someone *into* trouble (reporting his little sister for playing with his toy) or helping someone *out of* trouble (“Holly is touching the stove knob!”). If he’s helping, it’s not tattling.

Worth quoting

“Try to be the rainbow in someone’s cloud.” *Maya Angelou*

Just for fun

Q: How does a baby porcupine kiss his mommy?

A: Very carefully!



I can follow directions

To do her best in school, your little one needs to listen carefully and follow directions. She can get plenty of practice by doing what she likes best—playing with you! Enjoy these activities together.

Simon says, “Build”

Let your youngster dump a pile of Legos on the floor, and give her instructions for building a house one brick at a time. But she’ll have to listen closely—she should follow your directions only if “Simon says.” *Example:* “Simon says, ‘Put the small blue Lego on top of the big yellow one.’”

Pirate and parrot

Repeating a request is a great way for your child to make sure she listened and understood. Tell her to pretend you’re a pirate and she’s a parrot. In the car or while walking outside, use a pirate voice to name a “treasure” for her to spot. (“Arrh, matey, find a red fire truck.”) She mimics the request in her best parrot voice (“Find a red fire truck”) and



then tells you when she spots it (“Red fire truck. Squawk!”). Then, give her a new treasure to find.

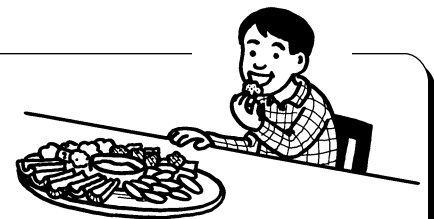
Draw the story

Good listeners can visualize what a speaker is saying. Tell your youngster a story about your day, sharing as many details as possible. (“I spilled my coffee during a meeting. There were five people at the round table....”) Have her listen carefully and draw a picture to illustrate your story. How many of the details can she include?♥

Eat your fruits and veggies

Fruits and vegetables aren’t just good for your child’s body—they fuel his brain, too. Get him to eat more produce with ideas like these:

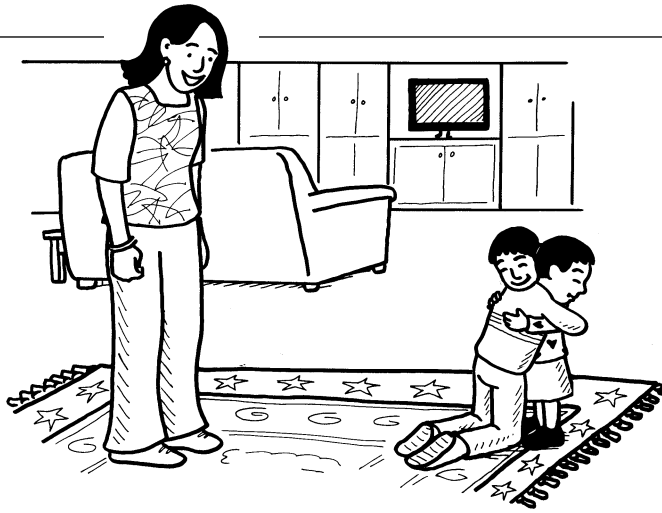
- Incorporate fruit into every meal. Let him decide which fruits to put into a smoothie at breakfast. Look over the school lunch menu together, and ask which fruit he will have. For dinner, you might add pineapple chunks to kebabs or slice pears into a salad.
- Ask your child to arrange raw veggies (snap peas, baby carrots, cherry tomatoes, cauliflower pieces) on a “party tray” while you make dinner. He could add a dip like salsa—and serve his appetizer to everyone.♥



No more teasing

“Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me” used to be a popular comeback for teasing. But the truth is, words *can* hurt. Use these tips for discussing teasing with your youngster.

If your child is teased... Talk about his feelings. “I bet it made you sad when Tommy teased you for not catching the ball.” Then, practice ways he could react. For instance, he might turn and walk away to play with someone else. *Note:* If the teasing continues, contact his teacher. Persistent teasing is a form of bullying and can harm self-esteem and affect learning.



If your youngster is teasing... Help him see things from the other person’s point of view. (“How would you feel if Sally called you a baby?”) Have him think of kind ways to apologize. (“I’m sorry I hurt your feelings. I won’t call you a baby anymore.”)

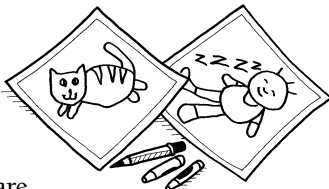
Make it clear that you won’t tolerate teasing at home—your little one will be less likely to tease at school if he isn’t allowed to do so at home.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

There’s a picture for that!

A fork and a knife on a highway sign means there’s a restaurant nearby, and a staircase with an arrow on a mall map indicates an escalator. These picture signs—*pictograms*—use symbols to give us information. Try these two activities to give your child practice in “reading” and using symbols.

1. Encourage your youngster to look for pictograms when you are out together. Let her draw them in a notebook, and help her label them. She’ll have her own book of pictograms.



2. Have your child design a few pictograms of her own to hang around your home. She might draw your cat leaping for a “Kitty crossing” sign or a “Sleeping baby” sign to hang on her little sister’s door. Ask her to show you her pictograms and tell you what each one means.♥



Questions that boost thinking

As your youngster creates and builds things, such as a clay sculpture or a train set, ask questions that will help her think critically. Here’s how.

Start with “What can you tell me about it?” She’ll probably be eager to name the objects she sculpted or to point out the hills and tunnels on her train tracks.

Then, ask your child about decisions she made. *Examples:* “How did you decide which colors to use?” or “Why did you put the steep hill before the tunnel?” She’ll think critically about her ideas as she explains her thought process.

Tip: When you ask your youngster a question, silently—and slowly—count to five before saying anything. The quiet will give her time to understand what you asked and think of her answer.♥



Practice patience

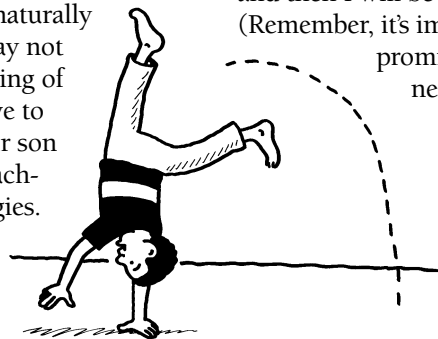
Q: When my son wants me to do something, whether it’s giving him a snack or watching him do a cartwheel, he wants it now. How can I encourage him to be more patient?

A: Young children are naturally impatient, and they may not have a real understanding of how long they will have to wait. You can help your son behave patiently by teaching him waiting strategies.

If you’re busy when he wants a snack, ask him to sing “Old MacDonal

d Had a Farm” —one verse for each animal in his toy barn—and then you’ll help him make his food. Or if you can’t watch his cartwheel right away, you could say, “Do five practice cartwheels, and then I will be ready to watch.” (Remember, it’s important to keep your promises so he’ll be patient next time.)

Gradually, he’ll start to use waiting strategies on his own. He might not always *feel* patient, but he will be learning how to wait.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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