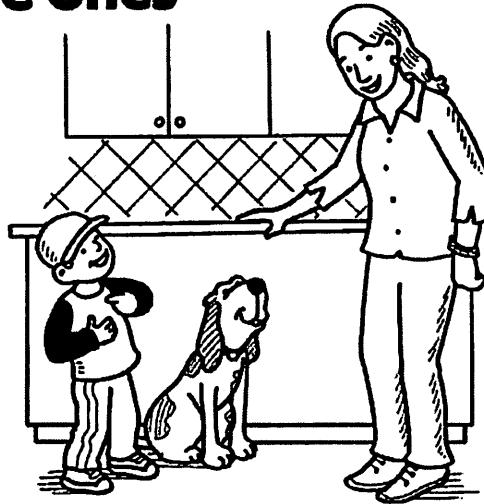


Social skills for little ones

Learning to get along with other children is an important part of school success at this age. Help your youngster develop social skills he'll use all his life with these strategies.

Practice Introductions. To get your child comfortable meeting new people, practice at home. He can start by introducing himself: "Hi, my name is Marcus." Then, he could add a compliment ("I like your dinosaur shirt") or share something he likes to do ("T-ball is my favorite sport. What's yours?").



Idea: Encourage him to pretend his toys are introducing themselves. ("Hello, I'm Hops-a-Lot the bunny. I like jumping games.")

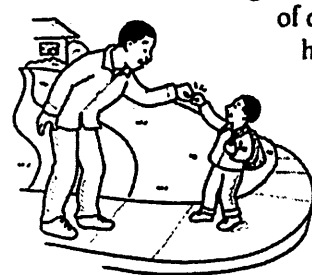
Make a friendship book. Have your little one create a "how-to" guide to friendship. Together, think of important things that friends do, like take turns and share toys. Help him write each idea on a separate sheet of paper, and let him illustrate it. For instance, he might draw himself sharing his favorite toy with a friend. Or he could illustrate friends taking turns while playing a board game. Staple the pages together, and invite him to "read" his guide to you.♥

Q & A Happier goodbyes

Q: My son is clingy and cries when I leave him at school. What can I do?

A: While there's no overnight cure for separation anxiety, it's normal at this age and does get better with time. In the meantime, here's a way to help your child cope.

Start by giving him some control over the situation. Together, make a list of different ways he can say goodbye, and let him choose one each day. For example, does he



want fist bumps, snuggly hugs, or three kisses? Then, follow through with his choice, and try to keep your goodbyes short.

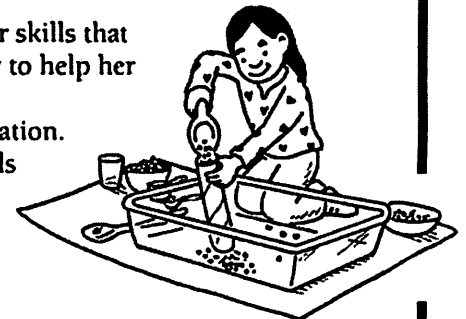
Also, remember that your son's teacher is a great resource for handling separation anxiety. Ask her to share tips that have worked for other families in the past.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Scoop up some fine motor fun

Scooping and pouring build the fine motor skills that your child needs for handwriting. Here's how to help her set up and use a "scooping station."

Get a shallow box or bin for a mess-free station. Have your youngster fill it with scooping tools (cups, spoons), small objects to scoop (beads, sprinkles), and containers to fill (bowls, pitcher). Then, suggest these five playful ideas:



1. Spoon sprinkles into a muffin tin to make colorful "muffins."
2. Prop up an empty cardboard tube against one side of the box. Scoop up popcorn kernels, and send them down the "tunnel slide."
3. Count how many scoops of dry beans will fit inside a pitcher.
4. Load up a toy truck with pebbles, and "deliver" them to different containers.
5. Scoop various objects into a bowl, and stir them together to make "soup."♥

PARENT TO PARENT

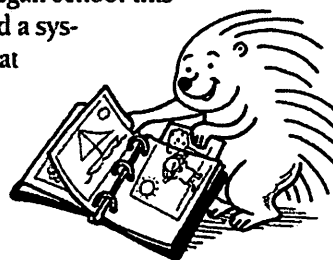
School-day memories

When my older daughter started school, I would display her schoolwork on the fridge, then store it in a bin where it was quickly forgotten. By the time my younger daughter began school this year, I had developed a system for both girls that gives them a record of their progress.

First, I gave each child a binder to decorate. As papers

come home, they decide which ones are "keepers" and put those in the binder. If a project is too big to fit, I let them take a photo of it, and they file the picture in the binder.

Once a month or so, we'll look back through their binders to see how much they're learning. Jamie was excited that she's writing her ABCs, and Sarah was proud that she's doing addition. Both girls can't wait to see how much they'll learn this year!♥



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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5567

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

September 2021



KID BITS

Comfy school clothes

Your children will be able to concentrate better in school if they're wearing comfortable clothes. For example, it's a good idea to dress in layers that are easy to take off if they get hot. If they're still learning to fasten buttons or snaps, elastic-waist pants may be best. *Tip:* Have them wear sneakers so they can run and play safely at recess.

Plan ahead for patience

When you head out with your youngster to run errands, let her carry a notebook and crayons. Then if you have to wait, encourage her to draw pictures of things she'd like to do when she gets home (ride her bike, play with action figures). She'll learn to keep herself occupied when she needs to be patient.

Wash up!

How can you motivate your child to wash his hands for the 20 seconds needed to kill germs? Have him sing the alphabet song while he scrubs. Or boost his creativity and independence by suggesting that he come up with his own 20-second idea. He might recite a tongue twister or nursery rhyme, or even make up a song to sing.

Worth quoting

"Hugs can do great amounts of good, especially for children."

Diana, Princess of Wales

Just for fun

Q: What are you guaranteed to get for your birthday?

A: A whole year older!



Success in school: A parent's role

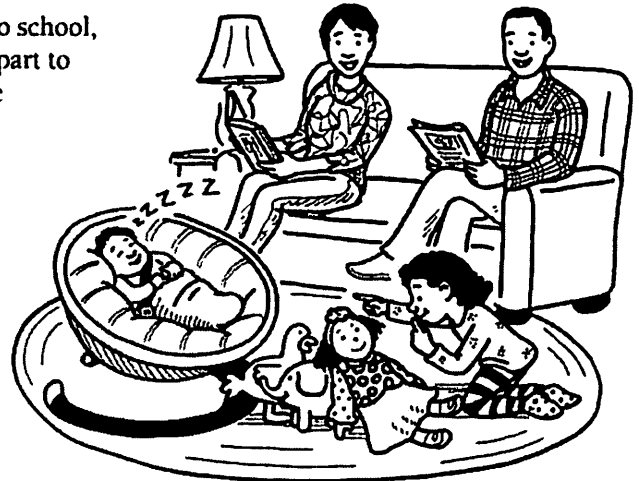
Your little one is headed to school, and you have an important part to play in her success. Here are ways to support her as she grows and learns.

Share enthusiasm

The more excited you are about school, the more excited your child will be. Each day, invite her to "teach" you something she learned. She might show you how to make "ants on a log" for a snack or name colors around the house. Whatever the lesson, be an enthusiastic "student." Your positive attitude will be contagious!

Encourage problem solving

Help your youngster think through and solve problems for herself. For instance, she may want to play a noisy game, but the baby is sleeping. Ask, "What could you do instead?" *Examples:* Play a quieter game, wait for the baby to wake up. She'll become more self-reliant and need less help at home and in class.



Be a listener

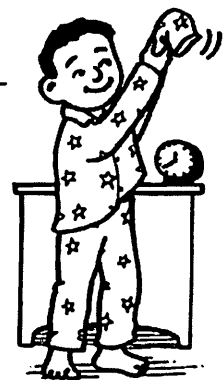
Your child gets her first lessons in listening by talking with you. During conversations, show that she has your full attention. ("Let's put away my phone so I can listen to you.") Acknowledge what she says, and ask questions to show interest. ("I love mac and cheese, too. Which vegetable goes best with it?") She'll see firsthand what a good listener does.♥

Bedtime routines that work

A peaceful bedtime routine can help your youngster fall asleep faster and get the 10–13 hours of sleep he needs to be ready to learn. Consider these tips.

● **Allow plenty of time.** Rushing through your child's routine may wind him up and make it harder for him to settle down. *Idea:* To avoid protests and delays, give him a 5- or 10-minute heads-up before starting the routine.

● **Set rituals.** Doing bedtime tasks in the same order creates a predictable routine that signals sleepy time. *Example:* Take a bath, put on pajamas, brush teeth, tuck in stuffed animals, listen to a bedtime story. *Idea:* Together, create a bedtime poster where you list the steps and he illustrates them.♥



What sounds are in that word?

Welcome back to sch-oo-l! Can your youngster hear the separate sounds in school? Hearing individual sounds is an important step toward reading success. Use these activities to help him notice sounds in words.

Snack on sounds. Label three cups “Beginning,” “Middle,” and “End,” and place them upside-down in a row. While your child looks away, hide a snack (cracker, pretzel) under the middle

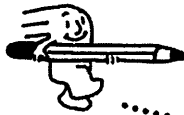


cup. Now ask, “Where is the *e* sound in *pet*?” and ask him to look under the cup that matches where the sound is in the word. If he picks middle, he’ll find the snack! Repeat by putting a snack under the first cup (“Where is the *c* sound in *cat*?”) and then the last one (“Where is the *l* sound in *ball*?”).

Talk like a robot. Encourage your youngster to blend the sounds in a word together. Pretend to be a robot, and say a single-syllable word one sound at a time (example: “*B-e-e-p*”).

Have your child try to figure out the robot’s word by repeating the sounds, saying them a little faster each time to make them blend (“*B-e-e-p, b-eeep, beep!*”). Now it’s his turn to be the robot and say a new word.♥

Fun with Words Learning with names



Your child’s name is one of the first words she learned to read and write. Help her explore the letters in her name—and in other family members’ names—with these ideas.

All about me

Have your youngster print her name vertically down the left side of a sheet of paper. Now help her write a word or phrase to describe herself that begins with each letter. Lila might include “loves her family,” “interested in science,” “laughs a lot,” and “acts in school plays.”



Q&A An at-home writer’s notebook

Q My granddaughter came home excited about her writer’s notebook in school. Now she wants to start one at home, too. How can I help her?

A It’s great that your granddaughter is enjoying her writer’s notebook. Let her decorate a special notebook to use at home—and to take with her wherever she goes.

She could use her notebook to write about her favorite things (unicorns, tacos, playgrounds), brainstorm a list of names for story characters she’d like to write about, or draw pictures that may lead to stories. She might even keep her notebook beside her bed to write about her dreams.

Invite your granddaughter to share her notebook with you. And add to her excitement by telling her that many famous authors keep writer’s notebooks. They use them to collect ideas and to stay in the habit of writing every day!♥



Count and compare

Help your child print each family member’s name on construction paper and cut it out. (Don’t forget pets!) Now she can count the letters in each name and line them up from shortest to longest. Then, take turns saying something that two or more family members’ names have in common. (“Dad and the cat both have *s-c-o-t* in their names—Scott and Butterscotch!”)♥

Parent to Parent Parents who read and write

At back-to-school night, my son Andrew’s teacher said it’s good for kids to see their parents reading and writing. They learn that those skills are an important part of everyday life, the teacher explained.

I realized Andrew might not know how often I read and write, since I mostly do it online. So on our next pizza night, we read the print menu together and wrote down which toppings everyone wanted. He helped

me order online, and while we waited for the pizza, I checked my email. I read an email from his aunt aloud, and Andrew helped me write a reply.

As I read my son’s bedtime story that night, I told him I was looking forward to reading my new novel in bed. He said,

“You read yourself a bedtime story?” I told him bedtime stories are for everyone—and I hope reading them becomes a lifelong habit for him like it has for me.♥



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Resources for Educators, a division of CCH Incorporated
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 800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
 www.rfeonline.com
 ISSN 1540-5648

Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

September 2021

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Click, Clack, Quack to School!* (Doreen Cronin)

It's Farm Day at school, and Farmer Brown and his animals are invited. But there are a few problems. First of all, mooing, clucking, and quacking aren't allowed. And as it turns out, neither are barnyard animals, so the farmer goes to school alone. Or does he? Find out in this story from the Click Clack series.

■ *Rosie Revere and the Raucous Riveters* (Andrea Beaty)

Rosie, a young girl who loves engineering, is working on a contraption that uses ketchup to keep snakes away. Then she's asked to help the Raucous Riveters, her aunt's group of airplane-building women. When things don't go as planned, she learns a valuable lesson in perseverance. Book one in The Questioners series. (Also available in Spanish.)

■ *Wild Symphony* (Dan Brown)

Join Maestro Mouse's colorful symphony of birds, crickets, cats, whales, and other creatures in this rhyming story. Each animal has an important lesson to share, and the pages hold hidden messages that lead to a surprise at the end. Includes a free app that plays music as you read.

■ *Power Up* (Seth Fishman)

This nonfiction book explores the incredible human body and the energy we use to do things like read, run, and think. Your youngster will learn the importance of powering her mind and body with books, food, exercise, and more.



Reading aloud—together!

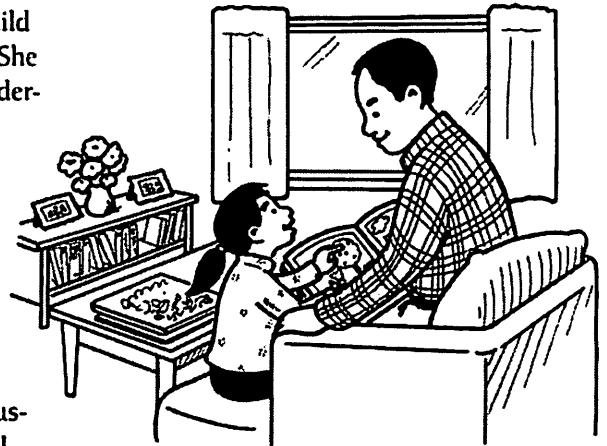
What happens when your child participates as you read to her? She learns to be an active reader, understands books more deeply, and discovers new words. Try these suggestions for getting the most out of read-aloud time.

Get to know a book

Before you read a book to your youngster, ask what she can tell about it just from the cover. She might look at the illustration, read the title, and say, "I think Fox is going to try to make a new friend." She could also flip through and look at a few of the pictures inside. This will prepare her to listen to and understand the book.

Pause to chat

Let your child set the pace when you read. She might stop you to ask what a word means, examine an illustration closely, or share something that the book reminds her of—all of which help her understand a story better. You could also pause from time to time to laugh or



wonder aloud about the story yourself, and you'll encourage her to do the same.

Mix things up

Becoming familiar with different kinds of books can turn your youngster into a well-rounded reader. Try wordless books, and work together to "read" the story. Also read alphabet books, and encourage her to say more words that start with each letter. You could even read aloud from a kids' cookbook and let her choose recipes for the two of you to make.♥

Storytelling in a box

Telling stories as a family builds bonds—and boosts your youngster's writing and speaking skills. Get started with a box full of inspiration.

● **Gather items.** Together, fill a shoebox with small objects that could spark stories. He might choose items from nature (acorn, pinecone), toys (action figure, dump truck), junk-drawer "treasures" (button, refrigerator magnet).

● **Tell stories.** Now take turns choosing objects and starting stories about them. Your child might begin, "A little squirrel was gathering acorns." You could continue, "He decided to load them into a dump truck to make carrying them easier!"

Tip: Swap out items in your storytelling box regularly to inspire new tales.♥



Sorting: Practical and fun

Putting items into categories builds your youngster's math and science skills, whether she's learning the difference between hexagons and pentagons or mammals and reptiles. Sort together with these activities.

Find everyday opportunities. Adults sort things all the time without thinking about it—your child can, too! Ask her to help you sort groceries by where they go (refrigerator, freezer, pantry) or recyclables into bins (paper, plastic, cardboard).



Play a "secret rule" game. Have each family member gather several household objects (remote control, earbuds, stapler). Take turns sorting items according to a secret rule.

You might sort by color, size, shape, or material—or something creative you come up with. Maybe your child will put a kaleidoscope, kazoo, and key in one pile and a pizza cutter, pen, and pear in another. Everyone else figures out her rule (same first letter).

The first one to get it right is the next "sorter."



MATH CORNER

I know that number!

Recognizing numbers instantly is an important early math skill. Here are two ways to practice.

1. Color by number. You and your youngster can each choose a page in a coloring book or print out a free coloring page online. Write a number, 1–9, in every section of the picture, then make a key telling what color matches each number (1 = purple, 2 = red). Now trade papers, and use the keys to recognize numbers and color your pictures.

2. Search for numbers.

Encourage your child to be a detective and find as many two-digit numbers as possible. She could carry a notepad and pencil around the house and write down



numbers she sees. She might spot 10, 20, and 30 on the dryer dial. Or maybe she'll step on the scale and see 49. When she's finished, have her read the numbers to you.

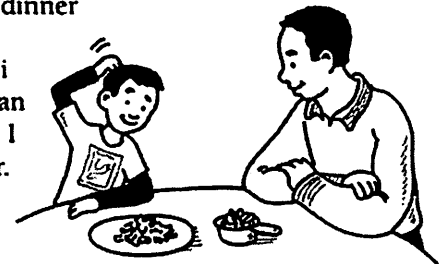
PARENT TO PARENT

Estimating with oodles of noodles

While we were making dinner last week, my son Victor asked whether a scoop of cooked macaroni would have the same number of pieces as an uncooked scoop. "What a good question," I said, and we set out to discover the answer.

I had Victor measure 1 cup uncooked noodles and count them into piles of 10. He counted by tens and then ones to find the total—83 pieces. Then he measured 1 cup cooked pasta onto his plate. This time, I encouraged him to estimate before counting. He thought it looked like about half as many noodles, so he estimated 42. He was close—there were 56.

Now Victor is wondering if he'll have the same results with different pasta shapes. We decided to try bowtie noodles for our next pasta night so he can find out!



SCIENCE LAB

What rolls? What slides?

With this experiment, your child will test different objects on a ramp to explore how they move.

You'll need: flat surface (cutting board, shoebox lid), items that are round or have curved sides (tennis ball, lemon), objects with flat sides (domino, bookmark)

Here's how: Help your child prop the board against a couch. Ask him to predict which items will roll down the ramp and which ones will slide. He can test his

predictions by letting each one go, one at a time, from the top of the ramp.

What happens? The lemon and the ball roll. The domino and the bookmark slide.

Why? The shape of an object affects how it moves. Things that are round or have curved sides roll. Items with flat sides slide. Can your youngster find objects that will slide and roll depending on how he places them on the ramp? **Hint:** Try a crayon or a round drink coaster.



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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1942-910X

Math+Science Connection

Beginning Edition

Building Excitement and Success for Young Children

September 2021



TOOLS & TIDBITS

A tower of apples
Here's a simple engineering activity that

also builds spatial reasoning skills. Challenge your youngster to see how many apples she can stack before the tower falls. Can she figure out a strategy that helps them balance? (*Hint:* Remove the stems, and stack every other apple upside down.)



My science poem

Encourage your child to write a poem inspired by the science all around him. A beautiful sunset may lead to a poem about what causes day and night. After watching a squirrel gather nuts, he might write about how animals prepare for winter. Explaining the science in his own words will help him understand it better.

Book picks

■ Your youngster will double over with laughter as a magic pot multiplies everything by two in *Two of Everything* (Lily Toy Hong). Based on a Chinese folktale.

■ From a gentle breeze to great gales, your child will discover different ways air moves in *How Does the Wind Blow?* (Lawrence F. Lowery).

Just for fun

Q: What has 100 heads and 100 tails?

A: One hundred pennies!



Playground math

A trip to the playground means fun all around—and math learning, too! Suggest these ideas during your child's climbing, swinging, and sliding adventures.

Count rungs and poles

Encourage your youngster to count the rungs as he swings across the monkey bars or climbs up a ladder. Or he could count poles as he runs and tags them. He can call out each number as he touches a rung or pole—he'll practice matching one number to one object. Point out that the last number he says is the total number.

Explore ordinal numbers

Turn the playground into a math obstacle course. Give your child instructions using ordinal numbers like *first*, *second*, and *third*. Example: "First, climb up the stairs. Second, go across the bridge. Third, slide down the slide." Can he do the steps in the right order? Keep



going, and he'll learn bigger numbers like *fourth*, *fifth*, and even *seventeenth*.

Identify shapes

How many different geometric shapes can your youngster spot? He may notice that the bars supporting the swing set form triangles and a tunnel slide is a cylinder. Ask him to tell you about the shapes' *attributes*, like how many sides the triangle has (3) or what shape is at each end of the cylinder (circle). *Idea:* Your child could draw his own playground, then label the shapes and describe their attributes. 🦋

Leaf investigations

Leaves on the ground ... leaves in the trees ... leaves are everywhere for your youngster to observe and compare in the fall. Head outside to explore them together.

● **Name the tree.** Examine leaves on different trees. Encourage your child to count their *points* (pointed tips) or *lobes* (rounded tips). Which tree's leaves have the most? Then, use a library book or a free app to identify the trees.

● **Spot details.** Let your youngster look closely at leaves. What does she notice? She might say insects have nibbled on them or they have lines inside. What does she think the lines, or *veins*, are for? (They carry water and nutrients to the tree.) 🦋

