

# Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

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Prince Edward County Public Schools  
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## KID BITS

### Respect personal space

Help your youngster understand personal space with the “hula-hoop strategy.” Have her place a stuffed animal in a hula hoop, and explain that the space inside the hoop belongs to that animal. Then if you notice her crowding someone, remind her to visualize a hula hoop around that person.

### “I’m an expert”

Boost your child’s speaking skills and confidence by encouraging him to share his expertise with others. Together, make a badge out of construction paper that says, “Ask me about \_\_\_\_,” and fill in the blank with his specialty. *Examples:* pandas, finger painting, building castles with blocks. Let him wear the badge to your next family get-together.

### Capture character

Reinforce good character by catching your youngster in the act — with a photo. If you notice her helping her little brother zip his jacket, for instance, snap a picture. She could glue the pictures on poster board and hang it up to make a “Wall of Good Character.”

### Worth quoting

“The earth laughs in flowers.”  
*E.E. Cummings*

### Just for fun

**Q:** What goes up when the rain comes down?

**A:** An umbrella!



## Growing a responsible child

When your child learns responsibility at an early age, he’ll be more likely to grow into a dependable teenager and adult. Here are everyday ways to plant the seeds of responsibility in your youngster.

### Sow the idea

Use the word *responsible* to describe your youngster’s actions. (“It was responsible of you to put your library book in your school bag.”) Also, talk about what you’re thinking when you show responsibility—he’s likely to imitate your behavior. You could say, “I want to sit down and read, but I’m responsible for making sure we all have clean clothes tomorrow. I’d better start the laundry first.”

### Nurture it

Even the youngest child can handle simple responsibilities like hanging up his jacket or flattening cereal boxes for recycling. Together, make a list of things your youngster is capable of doing, and



give him at least one job each day. Help him print each day’s task on a dry-erase board as a reminder.

### Watch it bloom

Make your youngster part of the “team” by having him pitch in along with the rest of your family. (“It’s game night, but we need to straighten up the family room. Let’s work together to finish quickly so we have time for more games!”) Your child will feel included, and you’ll show him the benefits of sharing responsibility.♥

## My history

Family history activities let your youngster connect with her heritage. Consider these suggestions:

- Look at a map together, and find the states or countries that family members came from. Ask your librarian for children’s books set in those places, and read them aloud to your child.
- Explore family memorabilia, such as photo albums, yearbooks, or scrapbooks. Your youngster will love getting glimpses of relatives when they were younger.
- Let your child ask family members about important events in their history. Her grandmother might describe her wedding, and her aunt may remember the day she became a big sister to you!♥



# Big thoughts for little thinkers

At this age, your youngster is developing different kinds of thinking skills that she'll use throughout school—and all her life. Try these ideas.

**Flexible thinking.** Play “What could it be?” Name an object, and take turns describing a creative way to use it. Your child might say that a Frisbee could be a steering wheel or a plate. Or a comb might be a miniature rake or a toy fence.



**Logical thinking.** Try puzzles like this one. Get 4 pennies, 4 nickels, 4 dimes, and 4 quarters. Arrange them in 4 rows of 4. Can your youngster rearrange them so that no two of the same coins are beside each other in the same row or column?

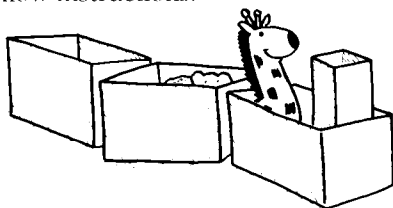
**Critical thinking.** Ask your child to retell a familiar story from a different character's point of view.

For instance, how would the mom tell the story of *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* (Judith Viorst)? Your youngster will need to consider how the mother thinks and acts to decide how the story would change.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Bring learning home

Recently, my son Miguel's class did a unit on wind and learned to fly kites. That's all he talked about for days! He wanted to make his own kite, so we looked online and found some easy-to-follow instructions.



When I mentioned Miguel's interest to his teacher, she was thrilled. She explained that doing activities related to what's happening in school is a great way to keep him learning at home. Since the class is doing a train unit now, Miguel and I are planning to visit a local railway museum. We are also collecting large cardboard boxes so he can make a train to play with at home.

We had a lot of fun flying our homemade kite, and Miguel is looking forward to teaching me what he learns about trains.♥



## Q & A

### Ways to build large motor skills

**Q:** My daughter prefers quiet activities to running around. How can I help her work on large motor skills so she enjoys being active, too?

**A:** Any active play, such as kicking a ball or riding a tricycle, will build your child's large motor skills.

Visit neighborhood playgrounds together, and encourage her to try different activities like walking on a balance beam or climbing a “rock wall.” At home, she might have fun painting words or pictures on an outdoor wall of your home or on a fence with a large paintbrush and water. Or let her “skate” around the kitchen on two paper plates.



Your child will benefit from having strong muscles and good coordination for playing and for school. For instance, she uses large motor skills in class when she paints on an easel, participates in Field Day, or plays games in PE.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Backyard astronomy

The night sky is filled with twinkling discoveries for your young astronomer to make. On a clear evening, stretch out on a blanket in the backyard, look up, and enjoy these activities.

#### Make a “telescope”

An empty paper towel tube can help your child focus on a specific spot in the sky. Let him gaze through his telescope and describe what he sees.

#### Compare stars

Have your youngster look for stars that are bigger, smaller,

brighter, or dimmer than others. He may also spot stars that appear to be different colors, such as green, blue, or red.

#### Find constellations

Use a book or an app to identify constellations. Give him black paper and white crayons to draw the constellations he spots in the sky. Or your youngster could locate his own constellation—perhaps he'll notice a group of stars in the shape of a heart or a dolphin.

*Idea:* Tell your child that stars twinkle but planets don't. Can he find a planet in the sky?♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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