

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

May 2010

Ishpeming Public Schools
Stephen Piereson, Superintendent

KID BITS



Search for numbers

Your youngster can learn to recognize numbers while you drive. Have her write the numbers 1–25 down a piece of paper and check each one off as she finds it. She might spot numbers on the side of a truck, on a speed limit sign, or in a house number. How many trips will it take her to check off all 25?

TV alternatives

The next time your child reaches for the remote control, distract him with a TV-free activity. Suggest that he ride bikes or play hopscotch, pull out a toy he hasn't played with lately, or draw pictures of his favorite book characters. Limiting his TV time will help keep him active and learning.

Getting to school

If your youngster will attend a new school this fall, practice getting there together. Walk the route if he'll be a walker, or visit his stop if he'll ride the bus. Also, talk to neighbors to find an older child who can walk or sit with him on the first day.

Worth quoting

"Summer afternoon, summer afternoon; to me those have always been the two most beautiful words in the English language."

Henry James

Just for fun

Q: What kind of stones are never found in a lake?

A: Dry ones!



My outdoor classroom

Go outside with your child this summer and enjoy nature together. Try these activities to sharpen her observation skills and get her excited about science.

Watch birds

Show your youngster how birds' bills are related to what they eat. Put foods like sunflower seeds, corn, and berries on a paper plate, and give her a clothespin and tweezers. Which tool works best for picking up each food? Then, take binoculars outside and let your child spot birds. She might see that a cardinal's bill is short and wide so it can crack seeds, and a robin's bill is long and thin so it can pull worms out of the ground.

Plant seeds

Planting beans will teach your child how vegetables grow. Find a sunny spot outside, and help her put seeds in the soil. Or she can plant them in a gallon plastic jug. Cut the top off the jug, and have her line the bottom with pebbles and fill it halfway with soil. As the plant grows, have her record what it looks like.

Family outings

If your youngster enjoys school field trips, why not plan one for your family? Here are a few ideas:

- Picnic any time of day. Pack bagels, cream cheese, and strawberries for a breakfast picnic. Or meet at a playground after work for sandwiches, whole-grain chips, and watermelon.
- Do something active together. Throw a Frisbee to each other at a park, or play miniature golf. On a rainy day, try bowling or roller skating.
- Be creative. Ask craft stores and community centers about family craft nights. You might tie-dye T-shirts, paint a tote bag, or make sand art.
- Visit a business. Ice cream shops, pizzerias, post offices, and factories may offer behind-the-scenes tours.♥



She can draw pictures of it at different stages. When the beans are ripe, let her pick and eat them!

Look at the sky

Lie on a blanket, look up at the night sky, and introduce your youngster to astronomy. Have her find the moon and tell you what shape it is. Then, look for stars. If she imagines lines connecting them, can she see a picture? She'll begin to learn about constellations—groups of stars that make patterns. Together, look for the Big Dipper. Finally, give her black construction paper and white chalk to draw what she observed.♥



“Let me!”

Elijah can button his own shirt. Kate has learned to peel a banana. These youngsters are becoming more independent by doing things for themselves—and your child can, too. Help him master everyday skills:

- Demonstrate how you pour milk from a carton. Then, let your child try. Remind him to use two hands to hold the carton just above his cup and tilt it slowly. Treat spills as no big deal—have him get a cloth or paper towel to wipe them up.



- Before a trip, ask your youngster to pack his own suitcase. First, explain how you chose items for yours (“We’ll be gone four days, so I packed four shirts”). After he packs, check together to be sure he has everything. Help him figure out anything that’s missing. (“Let’s see. What will you wear on the beach?”)

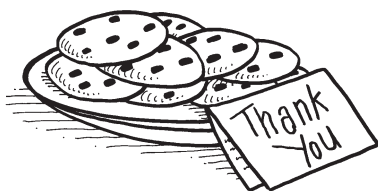
- Let your child wrap gifts for birthdays and holidays. Show him how to use safety scissors to cut a piece of wrapping paper large enough to cover the present. Then, teach him to smooth the paper down, fold the edges, and tape the ends closed. *Note:* Help your youngster take pride in the job he does—even if the wrapping isn’t perfect. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Thanking the teacher

Your child can let her teacher know how much she’s appreciated with one of these end-of-year gifts:

- Write “Thank you!” in large outline letters on a piece of poster board. Inside the letters, have your youngster draw pictures of things she enjoyed this year. She might draw dinosaurs that the class studied or pumpkins she saw in the pumpkin patch. Have her sign her name, and help her roll up the poster and tie it with a ribbon.



PARENT TO PARENT

Two homes, one routine

My wife and I recently separated, and we take turns caring for our daughter, Rachel. Her teacher suggested that we meet with the guidance counselor to talk about helping Rachel handle the situation.

The counselor was really helpful. She said that our daughter would adjust better to living in two homes if she had the same schedule and rules in both. She suggested that we agree on things like bedtime, discipline, and eating habits.

If we have questions or notice changes in Rachel’s behavior, such as crying or nervous habits, we can call the counselor. Then, with our permission, she will talk to Rachel about how things are going at home.

We know that our divorce will be hard for Rachel, but it feels good to know that we have support at school. ♥



- Let your child help you bake a treat and attach the recipe with a thank-you note. For example, you might make snack bars or cookies. Or have your youngster layer the dry ingredients (sugar, flour, baking soda, salt, chocolate chips) in a jar so the teacher can bake the bars or cookies whenever she’d like. ♥

Q & A

Keep reading!

Q: *Lately, my son has been showing interest in reading on his own. What can we do this summer to keep him excited about reading?*

A: Start by making sure that your child has easy access to books. If he doesn’t have a library card, now is a good time to sign up for one. He’ll be eager to check out books with his own card. Also, you can build his collection by

shopping at used bookstores and yard sales or asking relatives and neighbors if they have books their children have outgrown.

Then, make reading a whole-family activity. Gather in the living room after dinner and read a book or magazine while your youngster reads his. Try doing this every day—you’ll help make reading a regular habit for your child. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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