

As They Grow

*An Early Learning Newsletter for
Families of Preschool Children*

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THE MOST WONDERFUL TIME OF THE YEAR!

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One day, your child will go off on the school bus for her first day of school. We all want our children to be ready for that day, ready to succeed in school. Kindergarten teachers say that children need to be ready emotionally and socially to take advantage of what school has to offer. Surprisingly, the best preparation is not drilling children in ABC's, colors, and numbers. Instead, help your child become a clear communicator.

Daily practice helps children learn how to communicate their needs respectfully to others. When your child uses an inappropriate voice, ask him to try asking again in a better way. Let the child know you will be happy to help him when he can let you know clearly and pleasantly what he needs. Take the time to really listen to your child. Children have many things to tell us, and they need experience expressing ideas. Listen and ask questions to encourage your child to tell you more about his ideas. Giving your child this time helps him work on his own ideas and to learn how to be a better communicator.

Teach your children to use words to solve their own problems with other children. When children learn that they can solve their own problems with words, they are much less fearful and will not resort to aggression so easily. These communication skills are a gift you can give to your child that can help them develop better relationships with adults and other children. This is one of the best ways of helping them to succeed in school and in life.



PLAY A BOARD GAME TOGETHER

Children have fun and get great practice with counting skills when they play board games. Learning about numbers can be so much fun when you are counting the spaces as you move your game pieces. Get out your board games and take some time to play with your child. It is even more fun is to make your own board games with the whole family involved in the process.

The best games are ones where a team must work together rather than the games in which people need to beat each other. Competition can bring out cheating in many children, especially around the age of five and six. You can help reduce cheating by not stressing the winning, and concentrating instead on the fun. Sometimes it helps to change the rules to make the game more cooperative. Try to have everyone work together to win. Children grow out of this stage and later on are better able to accept losing. Until then, discuss cheating and use it as a gentle lesson while changing the games to make them more cooperative. The goals are to have fun as a family and build counting and number skills.



Child Care Resource and Referral of Kenosha and Racine has moved!!

The new location is at the YWCA, 740 College Ave., Racine, on the second floor. To contact the staff for questions and information call 262-884-9890, or check-out their new website at: www.theccrrs-rksite.org.

Training offered for child care providers :

September 12—Room Arrangement/Structure for Success

September 16—Files, What to Keep and What to Shred

October 3—Cooking with Kids, Put WOW Into Mealtime

October 7—Fall Make and Take, Crafts with a Fall Focus

November 4—1/2 Day Literacy SuperSaturday

Contact Mary Lofty to register at 262-884-9893.

FAMILY SMART/KID FRIENDLY

Workshops and parenting resources focused on discipline and challenging behaviors are available at locations throughout Racine County by calling:

◇ 262-939-1984 (eastern Racine County)

◇ 262-763-0809 (western Racine County)

Racine County UW—Extension provides workshops and resources through Family Smart/ Kid

Friendly, a collaboration with City of Racine

Health Department, Love Inc., Next Generation

Now, Racine County Human Services Department,

United Way of Racine County, and Western Racine

County Health Department.

Build Those Writing Muscles

Early childhood is a great time to build the strength in children's hands, so that their muscles will be strong for writing when they go to school. Building muscles can be made fun by giving children interesting things to do. Try giving children child-sized scissors, old magazines, a roll of tape, paper, playdough, and mazes or dot-to-dot games (you can even make these yourself).

Make a Writing Box

A writing box will invite your child to experiment and explore with written language. Children learn best by pretending to write: scribbling or even making up their own letters. A writing box is easy to put together. Save an old box and include writing tools of all kinds: fine and thick markers, crayons, pencils, and pens. Each one of these will feel different when they are used and will give your child practice using his writing muscles. Allow your child to decorate his own writing box so that he has ownership. Put recycled pieces of paper in the box as well: cardboard from cereal boxes and any other paper you have on hand—even junk mail! Suggest that your child write letters or notes to friends and family. Pretending to be a writer is an important step to becoming a real writer.

Read It Again!

“Oh no, not again!” Your preschool child asks you to read her favorite story again today. Children love being read the same story, but for adults it can be hard to read that same story over and over again. Even though it is boring for us, rereading is very valuable for children. Often children memorize the text and use this skill to being practicing their own pretend reading. The confidence gained from this pretend reading can help them sail successfully into reading.

Get to Know Your Local Library

Taking your child to the library regularly is one of the best ways to help him be ready for school. Discover the children’s room, and let your child select several books to bring home. Many libraries have cozy cushions and couches and make a great place to go on a rainy day. Curl up with your child and read some books together. Discover new favorites. Ask the librarian for help finding things that might interest your child. Your librarian can help you find books on dinosaurs, animals, or any other topic that your child loves. Make the library a habit for your family.

Building Blocks for Families

Building Blocks is for children ages 0 to 4 and their families. It is a free gathering time for families to discuss parenting issues. The children are actively engaged in books and musical activities along with parents during the 45 minute session.

Family Smart/Kid Friendly Partnership’s Building Blocks is offered for **6 weeks** at the **Burlington Library, 166 E. Jefferson Street**, on Wednesdays beginning on September 13th. The session begins at **10:30 am.** and ends at **11:15 am.** Please contact Linda Breuer at 262-763-0809 with any questions. Please bring your young child and come join the fun!

Kindergarten Readiness Is...

A child who listens

To directions without interrupting

To stories and poems for five or ten minutes without restlessness

A child who hears

Words that rhyme

Words that begin with the same sound or different sounds

A child who sees

Likenesses and differences in pictures and designs

Letters and words that match

A child who understands

The relationship inherent in such works as up and down, top and bottom, little and big

The classifications of words that represent people, places and things

A child who speaks and can

Stay on the topic in class discussions

Retell as story or poem in correct sequence

Tell a story or relate an experience of his or her own

A child who thinks and can

Give the main idea of a story

Give unique ideas and important details

Give reasons for his or her opinions

A child who adjusts

To changes in routine and to new situations without becoming fearful

To opposition or defeat without crying or sulking

To necessity of asking for help when needed

A child who plays

Cooperatively with other children

And shares, takes turns and assumes his or her share of group responsibility

And can run, jump, skip, and bounce a ball with comparative dexterity

A child who works

Without being easily distracted

And follows directions

And completes each task

And takes pride in his or her work

Adapted from Howlett, M.P. (1970, February 18). Teacher edition: My Weekly Reader Surprise, Vol. 12, Issue 20. Reprinted in Early Childhood News (May/June 2006). Vol. 18, Issue 3.

UW-EXTENSION FALL WORKSHOPS FOR FAMILIES

- ◇ **9/19, 9/26 and 10/3—Children in the Middle**, a three session workshop held at the Union Grove Elementary School, for separated, divorced or never married parents in Western Racine County. Contact Barbara Stoffel-Emde to register and for questions at 262-763-0809.
- ◇ **9/25—Sibling Rivalry**, a two hour seminar held at the Aurora Wellness Center in Burlington, will discuss the challenges of brothers and sisters, and focus on young children. Contact Tina Ginner with questions at 262-886-8492 or Fay Tichy to register at 262-886-8460.
- ◇ **10/2, 10/9, 10/16, 10/23, 10/30 and 11/6—A Tool Kit for Parenting**, a six session workshop held at In His Arms Lutheran Church in Burlington, for families to build a better relationship with their children. Contact Barbara Stoffel-Emde to register and for questions at 262-763-0809.
- ◇ **10/10—Racine and 10/17—Burlington—Managing Challenging Behavior**, a two hour seminar providing practical tools to work with challenging behaviors in children under the age of 6. Contact Tina Ginner with questions at 262-886-8492 or to register contact Fay Tichy at 262-886-8460.

LICKING YOUR LETTERS AND NIBBLING YOUR NUMBERS

There are so many wonderful ways to teach your children letters and numbers that aren't drilling or quizzing. How about asking your child to bake and eat their numbers and letters? Use this simple recipe to make homemade letter and number pretzels. Makes 6 large or 12 small pretzels.

1 cup water (120 degrees Fahrenheit)	1 teaspoon dry yeast, dissolved in water
1/4 cup brown sugar	2 teaspoons salt (sea salt preferably)
3 1/4 cups flour	1 egg beaten with 1 teaspoon water
1 Tablespoon baking soda mixed with 1 cup boiling water	

Directions:

1. Mix water, yeast, brown sugar, and salt in a large bowl. Add flour and mix until dough is smooth. Add more flour if sticky. If possible, let the dough sit overnight in a plastic container in the refrigerator).
2. Now divide the dough into 4, 6, or 12 pieces. Teach children to roll it into a rope, and then ask them to make a letter or number.
3. Place on a greased cookie sheet. Let the pretzel rise for 30 minutes or until about double in size. Brush with the water / baking soda solution.
4. Drop pretzel in boiling water / soda combination for the count of 10 and then lift out with a strainer or pancake turner. Brush with beaten egg and water solution.
5. Sprinkle with coarse salt, garlic, cinnamon, or sesame seeds. Bake in a 400 degree oven for 12-15 minutes or until brown.

References:

Belinda, Christine (August / September 2004). "Promoting School Readiness." Better Kid Care.
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