

As They Grow

An Early Learning Newsletter for Families of Preschool Children

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Learning for life

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Newsletter Topics

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5 Reasons Why the First Three Years are so Important

Your baby's brain is an intellectual dynamo. Use the tips below to help grow and strengthen your baby's brainpower.

1. The experiences your baby has in the first few years of life determine how her brain develops and how she interacts with her world.
2. Neural connections in your baby's brain — how brain cells connect to one another — are formed early in life. Your baby waits for experiences to determine how those connections are made.
3. Good, positive experiences help your baby develop well. Read to him, talk to him, help him play simple, fun games.
4. Touch, rock, talk, smile and sing to your baby. It does more than make you both feel good. It helps her brain develop.
5. Infants and babies develop rapidly in loving, talkative homes.

RAINY DAY FUN

Counting Exercises

On a rainy April day when you can't go out, do some simple exercises inside together. As you exercise, listen to some bouncy music to help you get moving.

- Let's touch our toes ten times.
- Try to count with me.
- Now lets jump up and down.
- One, two, three, four, etc.



Tape Children's Singing

Use a tape recorder while your children sing. Then play back the tape for them and watch the delight on their faces. Play it again for the rest of the family. Save it for another day and encourage the children to sing along with it.

Helping Children Feel Special

Children need to know that you really care about them. They know this from your kind tone of voice and gentle touch. They feel good when you look into their eyes as you talk to them and really listen when they talk to you. Children become frustrated and angry when you handle them in an unfriendly or rough way, use a loud voice or ignore their interests. The way you relate to your children is very important. It helps shape the way children see themselves. Try to follow these ideas. You will be helping your children “feel special.”

- ◇ Talk to them often, it builds a happy relationship.
- ◇ Look right into a child's eyes when you talk together. It helps the child feel important and special.
- ◇ Use the child's name when you talk. It makes what you say more personal.
- ◇ Use a kind tone of voice and gentle touch.
- ◇ Help children when they ask. It shows you care.
- ◇ Use routines, such as meals and nap time, as times to talk to and work with your children. It gives them special attention while they get personal care.
- ◇ Listen when your children are trying to talk to you about what interests them. Carry on conversations with them.
- ◇ Give praise and show delight for the things your children do. It helps them feel proud of what they can do by themselves.

Story Time

Stories can help children practice their thinking skills, such as naming, matching, guessing, and comparing. It gives them time with you to enjoy warm, personal experiences that make learning to read more fun later on. The following “tips for story time” can help to make the time enjoyable for both you and your child.



- ◇ Be patient. Begin with a very short story. Never force children to sit and listen. If interest wanes, continue reading if you want to finish the story. Children continue to learn language by listening to you read, whether they are looking at the book or not. Never force a child to sit still while you finish reading. Many children are 18 months or older before they listen to an entire, short book.
- ◇ You are role modeling many things when you read to children — how to carefully handle a book, turning pages, opening at the front of the book, ending at the back.
- ◇ Choose an out of the way place for your story time. Select a place that is comfortable and away from the noise and activity of the rest of the house.
- ◇ Schedule a time for stories. Before or after a meal or nap is a good time. Before bed at night is popular with many families.
- ◇ Using a finger-play, puppet, or song with the story will capture the child's attention and interest.
- ◇ Encourage the child to take part in the story by talking about what they see.
- ◇ Change your voice to match the story.
- ◇ Add to your book collection by visiting a used book store, or by using your public library.

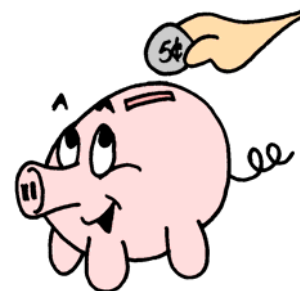
Managing Money: It Can Start with Pennies and Nickels!!

Preschool is an important time to lay the foundation for understanding about money.

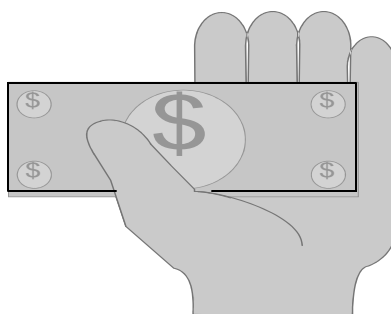
Money management skills are developed out of the ideas, attitudes, habits, and values we acquire about money as we grow up. By giving children opportunities to learn about money management, parents help them develop into responsible adults.

Children's readiness to learn about money depends on their interests, abilities, levels of understanding, and needs rather than their age. Parents who are aware of the many ways that children learn can help provide them with positive learning experiences starting at a young age.

Young children can learn some important basic concepts about money if they are illustrated by concrete examples.



YOUR CHILD CAN. . .	TO LEARN ABOUT. . .
Play counting games with pennies, nickels and dimes	▶ Money denominations
Purchase one item at the store	▶ Money as a medium of exchange
Start a piggy bank to save for a small item	▶ Purchasing power ▶ Saving
Choose between two items that could be purchased	▶ Setting priorities ▶ Money limits ▶ Making choices
Make a birthday cake for a grandparent	▶ Sharing ▶ Substituting time and talents for money
Contribute money at church	▶ The fun of being creative

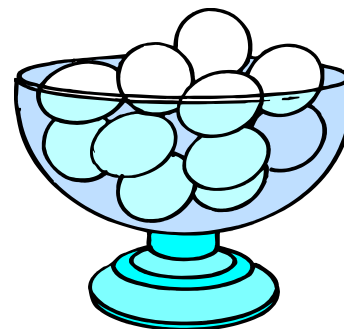


Keep Hard-Cooked Eggs Safe to Eat

Whether you are preparing an Easter basket or hard cooking eggs for a springtime salad, it is important to handle the eggs carefully to avoid food-borne illness.

Here are some safety tips to follow:

- ▶ Buy clean Grade A eggs with no visible cracks. Bacteria can enter eggs through cracks in the shell.
- ▶ Do not keep fresh or hard-cooked eggs out of the refrigerator more than two hours.
- ▶ Refrigerate eggs at 40 degrees F on the shelf, not in the door.
- ▶ Eggs should not be washed. A protective coating is placed on the outside by the hen. Government regulations require that USDA-graded eggs be carefully washed and sanitized. The egg is coated with a tasteless, natural mineral oil to protect it.
- ▶ When eggs are hard cooked, the protective coating is washed away, leaving bare the pores in the shell for bacteria to enter and contaminate it.
- ▶ Hard-cooked eggs should be refrigerated within 2 hours of cooking .
- ▶ Use uncracked, hard-cooked eggs within one week.
- ▶ Once you've peeled a hard-cooked egg, refrigerate leftovers right away and use them within 3 or 4 days.
- ▶ **Dyeing eggs:** After hard cooking the eggs, dye them and return to the refrigerator within 2 hours.
- ▶ **Hunting eggs:** Hard-cooked eggs for an egg hunt must be prepared with care to prevent cracking the shells. The total time for hiding and hunting eggs should not exceed 2 hours. The "found" eggs must be refrigerated until eaten.



It is better to use plastic eggs with toys, sugar-free gum or less perishable treats inside, if the hunted, hard-cooked eggs will be in a warm environment for more than two hours.

For more information on food safety and ways to cut your risk of food-borne illness, contact the UW-Extension Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program at 262 635-6824 or the USDA Meat & Poultry Hotline at 1-888-674-6854.

UW-EXTENSION WORKSHOPS FOR PARENTS/CAREGIVERS

◇ Addressing Child Abuse and Neglect Issues in the Child Care Setting.

This training is for licensed and certified child care providers in Racine County. Registry barcodes will be provided at **NO CHARGE**.

Tues., April 24, 6:15-8:15 p.m. — Ives Grove Office Complex, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant
The Racine County Family Violence Community Coalition will provide best practices to community professionals who work with victims of family violence. **To register, call 262-886-8460. Registration deadline: Wed., April 18.** Questions? Contact Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262-833-8732.

◇ Managing Stress

Wed., May 16, 6:15-8:15 p.m. — Ives Grove Office Complex, 14200 Wash. Ave., Sturtevant
This workshop will cover a variety of techniques to reduce stress, anxiety, anger and family conflict. Registry Barcodes available for Child Care Providers for \$5.00, payable the night of the seminar. **To register, call 262-886-8460 by May 8.** Questions? Contact Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262-833-8732.

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Wisconsin Council on Children and Families, 555 W. Washington Ave., Madison, WI 53703 www.wccf.org

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