



As They Grow

Early Learning News for Families of Young Children

UW Extension
Learning for life

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— School Readiness Topics —

Positive Motivation

We want to avoid “unmotivating” children. We want to encourage exploration, persistence, and enjoyment of mastering behaviors. We want to have children engage in an activity for its own sake, just because of the satisfaction it brings.



We want children to expect success, seek challenges, and be self-confident. When children enjoy learning, they learn more, comprehend what they learn better, and remember it longer. They are also more persistent and eager to do challenging work.

When it comes to maintaining and enhancing motivation, **how** you do it is more important than **what** you do. Child motivation is positively affected by:

- minimal pressure to perform
- ample choices
- opportunity to play with others
- warm and nurturing parents and caregivers

Use encouragement instead of praise. Give feedback, pointing out accomplishments. Instead of general praise, which can sound empty and does not provide useful information, be precise in your encouraging statements. For example, “good job” doesn’t help a child know what has been learned, and it loses its meaning when used for everything. On the other hand, “I can read every letter in your name. Your printing is clear and readable,” acknowledges what the child has accomplished.

Avoid saying, “That’s easy.” It’s tempting to tell a child who is struggling with a task, “That’s easy.” However, it makes a child feel incompetent. Instead, acknowledge the difficulty and/or offer a constructive suggestion.

Provide learning within a child’s reach. When learning is within reach, it takes a child just beyond existing ability and makes the activity fun. It’s not so easy, as to be boring; and, not so difficult, as to be frustrating. It’s fun!

Helping Young Children to Learn

Here are tips to help young children to be ready to learn, read, and write.

- ▶ Read stories you both enjoy.
- ▶ Build on a child’s existing understandings. Find books about familiar topics such as family or animals. To stretch a child, consider learning about families from other cultures or books about both familiar and unfamiliar animals.
- ▶ Connect the books you read to a child’s life experiences. For example, if you visit a lake, the child will likely be more interested in reading about lakes (boats, fishing, frogs, swimming) and will understand more of what is read.
- ▶ Let the child’s interests guide your choice of books. If a preschooler is interested in trucks, get and read books about trucks.
- ▶ While reading, ask open-end questions to engage the child. If the child enjoys these questions, let the child become the storyteller.
 - What would you do if that happened to you?*
 - How would you feel?*
 - Have you ever seen a duck swimming?*
 - What does it look like?*
- ▶ Talk with the child about things that interest both of you.
- ▶ Provide materials for scribbling and “writing” in pretend play.
- ▶ Help the preschooler make signs and provide props (tickets or tablets) for dramatic play.
- ▶ Most of all, help the child see reading as something fun to do.



Banana Peanut Butter Cookies

Makes 36 (2 inch) cookies. Nutrition Information per cookie - 60 calories, 2 grams total fat

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|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| √ 1 large ripe banana, sliced | √ 1 egg |
| √ 1/3 cup creamy peanut butter | √ 1 1/4 cup all-purpose flour |
| √ 2 Tbsp. margarine | √ 3/4 tsp. baking soda |
| √ 1/2 cup granulated sugar | √ 1/4 tsp. salt |
| √ 1/2 cup packed light brown sugar | √ 1 Tbsp. granulated sugar |

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Spray baking sheets with non-stick cooking spray.
2. In mixing bowl, combine banana, peanut butter and margarine. Mix until creamy with hand-held mixer. Add sugars and egg; continue mixing until light and fluffy.
3. Add flour, baking soda and salt to batter. Use a spoon to stir until all the flour has been incorporated into the batter.
4. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto baking sheet. Sprinkle cookies with sugar, then press a fork twice on tip of each cookie to form a crisscross pattern.
5. Bake on middle rack of oven for 10-12 minutes or until golden brown.
6. Remove from baking sheet and place on cooling racks.

Recipe from "5 A Day Kids Cookbook." Dole.

UW-Extension, Racine/Kenosha Nutrition Education Program, 1220 Mound Ave, Racine, WI 53404, (262) 635-6824.

UW-Extension Workshops for Parents/Caregivers

- ◇ **Kindergarten Readiness** — **Tina Ginner**, UW-Ext. Early Care & Education Training Coordinator
Thursday, May 29, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant
Learn what area Kindergarten educators say is important for children to know and be able to do when they enter Kindergarten. Parents and those interested in issues related to young children may register by calling **262 886-8460 by May 22**. To receive **Registry Barcodes or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **May 22**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262-833-8732.
- ◇ **Managing Challenging Behaviors** — **Tina Ginner**, UW-Ext. Early Care & Education Training Coordinator
Monday, June 30, 6-8 PM — **Ives Grove Office Complex**, 14200 Washington Ave., Sturtevant.
Learn strategies and techniques to deal with challenging behaviors of children under six years of age. Parents, grandparents, and those interested in issues related to young children may register by calling **262 886-8460 by June 23**. To receive **Registry Barcodes or verification of attendance, a \$5 check or money order** to Racine County UW-Extension, 14200 Washington Avenue, Sturtevant, WI 53177 must be received by mail or in person on or before the registration deadline of **June 23**. See flyer for detailed information or contact, Barbara Stoffel-Emde, 262-833-8732.

Racine County UW-Extension

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