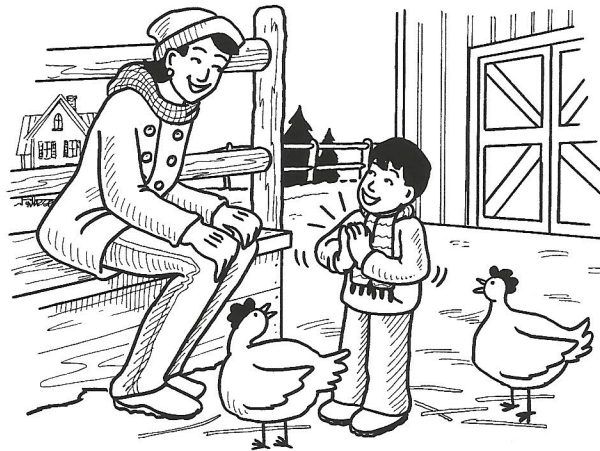


What's in a word?

Being able to pick out individual sounds in words can help your youngster become a better reader. Try these two games to work on rhymes and syllables:

- Let your child choose several three-letter words from a book and copy each one onto an index card. Together, come up with three words that rhyme with each of his choices and write each one on a separate index card. If he picks "red," you might write "bed," "fed," and "led." Mix up the cards, and lay them facedown in rows. Take turns flipping over two cards and helping your youngster



read the words aloud. If they rhyme, keep the pair. If not, flip them back over to end your turn. Play until every card is gone.

- Ask your youngster to think of a one-syllable word (phone) and to clap once as he says it. On your turn, clap twice while saying a

two-syllable word (chicken). Can your child think of a three-syllable word? If not, offer a suggestion, or let him begin the game again with a one-syllable word.♥

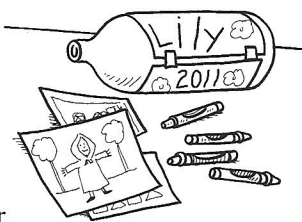
ACTIVITY CORNER Time in a bottle

Making a time capsule with your child is a good way to look back on her achievements in 2011 and get her thinking about what she'll accomplish in 2012.

Materials: clean 2-liter plastic bottle, crayons, construction paper, glue

Together, go through photographs and schoolwork from the past year. Ask your youngster to pick 5–10 favorites and tell you about them. She might include a photo from the first day of school, her drawing of a favorite book character, and a pattern she made in math.

Help her roll the items tightly together and slip them into the bottle. Let her make a label to glue on that includes her name and the year. Then, put the bottle in a safe spot (kitchen cabinet, garage shelf) to open one year from now. Encourage your child to think about what she might like to include in next year's capsule, such as a picture of herself riding a bike.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Getting started with homework

My daughter's teacher, Mrs. Hernandez, recently began sending home a monthly activity calendar. Layla has to choose 10 assignments from the calendar each month, such as writing her name in a rainbow of colors or searching for shapes in the refrigerator.

I was surprised because I didn't have homework at Layla's age, so I asked Mrs. Hernandez about it. She explained that homework helps little ones remember what they learn at school and encourages them to continue learning at home. She also pointed out that while Layla should do the activities on her own, it's okay for me to help and remind her.

We started by reading the calendar together, and Layla circled the things she wanted to do. I helped her find the supplies she needed and sat with her while she worked. This way, she knows that school is important, and I get to see what she's learning in class.♥



Q & A

Dealing with divorce

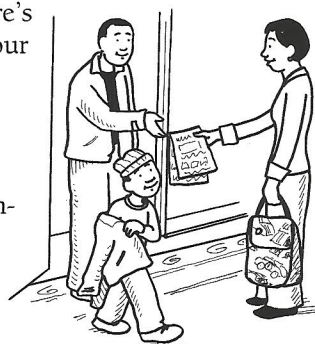
Q: My husband and I recently separated, and we're concerned about how the changes will affect our son. Should we bring this up with his teacher?

A: Family changes can be difficult for little ones, as they take comfort in predictable routines. Luckily, there's a lot you can do to help your youngster adjust.

First, it's important to share the news with his teacher so she can look for behavior changes. For example, your son might get frustrated or upset more easily. The teacher may recommend that he talk to

the school counselor about his feelings or join a "support group" for children whose parents are separated or divorced.

At home, try to continue a regular schedule. If possible, keep bedtime and rules the same at both houses. Also, communicate with each other about school. Pass along papers, and try to make sure you both attend school events (conferences, plays). Your son will be comforted knowing that even though you're apart, you're working together to make sure he's happy and successful.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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