



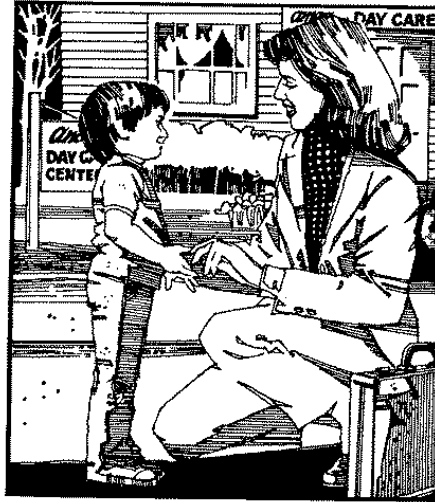
Better  
Kid Care  
Program

# PARENTS COUNT

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



**O**ne 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.



When your child uses a whiney or demanding voice, ask him to try asking again in a better way. Say you will be happy to help him when he can let you know clearly what he needs. This daily practice helps children learn how to communicate their needs respectfully to others. Take the time

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.

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

## 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 begin practicing their own pretend reading. The confidence children gain from this pretend reading can help them sail successfully into reading.

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.

using his writing muscles. Put recycled pieces of paper in the box as well: cardboard from cereal boxes and any other paper you have on hand. 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.

## GET TO KNOW YOUR LOCAL LIBRARY

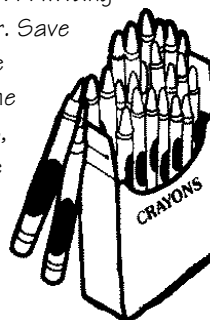
Taking your child to the library regularly is one of the best ways to help her be ready for school. Discover the children's room, and let your child select several books to bring home. Many libraries have cozy cushions and couches and make a great place to go

## 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 shirt 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

## 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 to tape, play-dough, and mazes or dot-to-dot games (you can even make these yourself).

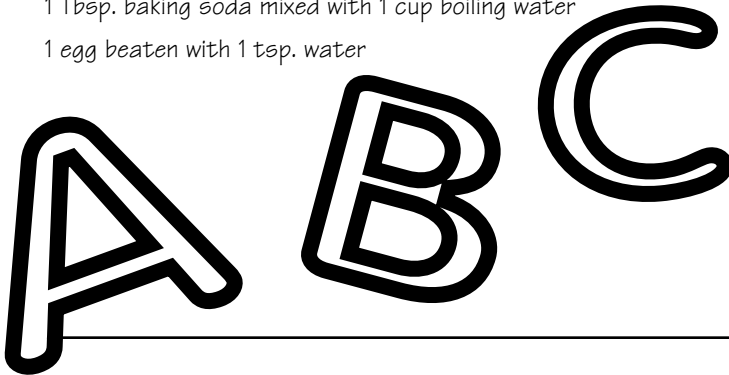
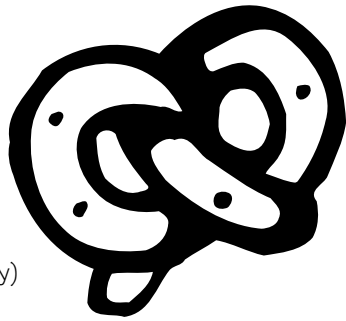


# Licking your Letters and Nibbling your Numbers

There are so many wonderful ways to teach your child 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.

## INGREDIENTS:

- 1 cup water (120° F) fairly warm but not hot
- 1 tsp. dry yeast, dissolved in the water
- 4 Tbsp. brown sugar
- 2 tsp. salt (sea salt preferably)
- 3 1/4 cups flour
- 1 Tbsp. baking soda mixed with 1 cup boiling water
- 1 egg beaten with 1 tsp. water



## DIRECTIONS:

Mix water, yeast, brown sugar, and salt in a large mixing 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 fridge.)

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.

Place on a greased cookie sheet.

Now let the pretzels rise for 30 minutes or until about double in size. Brush with the water/soda solution.

For a chewier crust, dissolve 2 tablespoons baking soda mixed in 4 cups boiling water. Drop the pretzel in for about the count of 10, and then lift out with a strainer or pancake turner.

Brush with beaten egg and water solution.

Sprinkle with coarse salt, garlic, parmesan cheese, cinnamon sugar, or sesame seeds. Bake in a hot oven 400 to 450 degrees F for 12 to 15 minutes or until well browned.



## PLAY A BOARD GAME TOGETHER

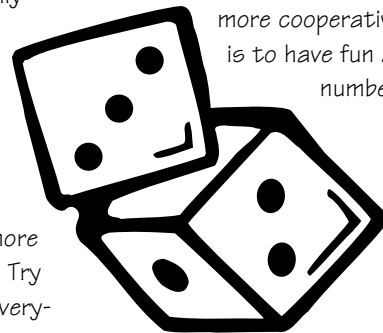
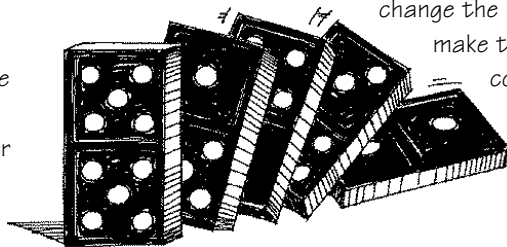
Children have fun and get great practice with counting skills when they play board games. Learning about numbers can be so much more fun when you are counting the spaces as you move your game piece. Get out your board games and take some time to play with your child. Even more fun is to make your own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

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 goal is to have fun and build number skills.



**Pennsylvania Pathways**

Professional Development  
for Child Caregivers

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Cooperative Extension  
College of Agricultural Sciences

Supported by funds from the Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare, Pennsylvania Pathways Program.

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Developed by the Penn State Better Kid Care Program  
253 Easterly Parkway, State College, PA 16801 • Phone: 1-800-452-9108 • Website: betterkidcare.psu.edu.

Dr. James E. Van Horn, Better Kid Care Program Director

Lyn Horning, Program Associate