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Giving Your Children Positive Attention

We All Need a Little TLC



We all need a little TLC, that's tender loving care. Parents need time to spend with their children and children need their parents' attention. Although many parents are busy working and taking care of their homes, it's even more important to take care of your children by giving them a gift you consider precious—QUALITY TIME! Quality time is the 10 minutes you take to read a book together, or the 20 minutes you spend playing a game of catch together, or even the five minutes you take just listening to your child talk about her/his day. Quality means the "feel good stuff" that comes from interacting with your child in a positive way. Just about everyone would agree that it's not

a matter of how rich or poor you are, or how much education you have, it's what you do and say at home that has the most positive impact on your child. Being a good listener and having open communication with your child are the key elements of parent involvement.

Benefits for Students

- Having more positive attitudes toward school.
- Earning higher achievement in reading.
- Displaying higher quality more grade appropriate work.
- Completing more homework on weekends.
- Observing more similarities between family and schools.

Benefits for Parents

- Receiving ideas from school on how to help children.
- Learning more about educational programs and how the school works.
- Becoming more supportive of children.
- Becoming more confident about ways to help children learn.
- Gaining more positive views of teachers and the school.

Steps for Parents

Here are six simple steps to help your child grow up healthy and happy.

1. Attend school activities
2. Let your child know that you admire her/him.
3. Communicate with your child about school, friends, hobbies, places she/he likes to go and things she/he likes to do.
4. Praise your child's progress with a pat on the back and positive words.
5. Read with your child.
6. Encourage your child to develop hobbies.

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Keep your kids active this summer!



Summer is a great time to get your kids active! Many times it is tempting to sit them in front of electronics, but they will love moving inside and outside!

Why is it important to keep them active?

- Active children are healthier.
- They develop fundamental movement skills.
- Physical activity stimulates brain development.

How much physical activity do children need?

National Association of Sport and Physical Education (NASPE) has recommended that at a minimum preschool children need:

- 60 minutes daily of structured physical activity, and
- 60 minutes daily of unstructured physical activity.
- To not be sedentary for more than 60 minutes at a time, except when sleeping.

Easy & fun ways to keep kids active

- Create an obstacle course with things you have at home so that kids can go over, under, through, and balance.
- Blow bubbles and have your child chase and pop them.
- Kick and throw a ball.
- Relay races or play tag.
- Use a laundry basket and play basketball.
- Have children push your full laundry basket and pretend it is a train.
- Dance, dance, dance.
- Limit competition and focus on the things that your child is doing well.

Written by Laura Boisseau (Health Coordinator for JCPS Early Childhood).

Kentucky School Readiness Definition

Ready to Grow, Ready to Learn, Ready to Succeed

School readiness means each child enters school ready to engage in and benefit from early learning experiences that best promote the child's success.

The governor's task force recommends the following for kindergarten readiness:

Health and Physical Well-Being

My child:

- Eats a balanced diet.
- Gets plenty of rest.
- Receives regular medical and dental care.
- Has had all necessary immunizations.
- Can run, jump, and climb and does other activities that help develop large muscles and provide exercise.
- Uses pencils, crayons, scissors, and paints and does other activities that help develop small muscles.

Emotional and Social Preparation

My child:

- Follows simple rules and routines.
- Is able to express his or her own needs and wants.
- Is curious and motivated to learn.
- Is learning to explore and try new things.
- Has opportunities to be with other children and is learning to play/share with others.
- Is able to be away from parents/family without being upset.
- Is able to work well alone.
- Has the ability to focus and listen.

Language, Math, and General Knowledge

My child:

- Uses five- or six-word sentences.
- Sings simple songs.
- Recognizes and says simple rhymes.
- Is learning to write his or her name and address.

- Is learning to count and plays counting games.
- Is learning to identify and name shapes and colors.
- Has opportunities to listen to and make music and to dance.
- Knows the difference between print and pictures.
- Listens to stories that are read to them.
- Has opportunities to notice similarities and differences.
- Is encouraged to ask questions.
- Has his or her television viewing monitored by an adult.
- Understands simple concepts of time (e.g., night and day, today, yesterday, tomorrow).
- Is learning to sort and classify objects.

NOTE: *School-readiness skills and behaviors are not to be used to determine school eligibility; all children who meet the legal age requirement are entitled to a public school education.

Family Reading Time

Research shows that reading to your child is one of the best ways to ensure his or her interest in the world of books.

Reading to children when they are infants and preschoolers helps them learn new words, increases their ability to concentrate, and makes them want to learn to read. Children then take those strong verbal skills with them to school, where learning to read is that much easier.

Think of all of the school lessons ahead for your child that will depend on being a good reader, and you'll see the importance of family reading time in your child's school success.

Parents who work all day may wonder how they can fit reading into the few hours they have with their children. A few suggestions may help:

- **Anything and everything.** Encourage your child to read anything—cereal boxes, trading cards, signs, magazine ads, and newspapers. Or find a favorite recipe, and read it with your child as you prepare it together.
- **Read and ride.** Working families often spend extra time in the car as children ride to and from school and childcare. Use road time to read vanity license plates, find plates from different states, and read billboards and interesting road

signs. Also, keep a few favorite books or books on tape in a book bag for reading on the road.

- **Better than TV.** Read a good action story to replace an evening television program. Start an exciting chapter book with your family, and they'll be eager to hear what comes next.
- **Pack a book.** When you're going someplace with your child where there might be a long wait, such as a doctor's office or an airline terminal, bring along a bag of favorite books.
- **Phone home.** Work the night shift or can't get away from the office? Keep a few children's books at work. Use your coffee break to call home and read to your child.



Check it Out at the Library

Make a habit of stopping at the Louisville Free Public Library (LFPL) on your way home from work and childcare. Linger while you're there. Read a book to your child, and allow time for him or her to explore and choose books of his or her own. Here are a few books you and your child may enjoy.

One Brown Bunny by Marion Dane Bauer

Meeow and the Big Box by Sebastian Braun

Monsters Don't Eat Broccoli by Barbara Jean Hicks

When the World Is Ready for Bed by Gillian Shields

Bear's New Friend by Karma Wilson

Money Smarts



"How much does that cost?" "Why can't I buy it?" Children have a lot to learn about money. Here are ways to help your child understand:

- Start a change jar to teach him or her about saving money. Get a small, clear container, and let him or her put your change into it. Explain that when it's full, you'll count the coins together, and he or she can use a handful of them to buy something.
- Talk about needs and wants. A simple way to do this is to make a grocery list together. Say, "Let's write everything we need first. Then, we can add what we want." Start with necessities like milk, bread, and fruit. At the bottom, he or she might put ice cream or cookies.



Starting Kindergarten: School-Readiness Tips and Strategies for Families

If your child will be 5 years old on or before October 1, he or she will be transitioning to kindergarten. Your child is about to embark on a wonderful lifelong journey of learning. The transition to kindergarten may oftentimes be a hectic endeavor. Below, you will find a list of tips and strategies that can help make the move to the Primary Program as smooth as possible.

Visit your child's new school before the first day. Make an appointment to meet the teacher, principal, and other school personnel. Tour the building so your child knows where key places are located, such as the bathroom, gym, library, and cafeteria. For kids, going to school is a big deal. They need to get familiar with it so they'll be relaxed and ready to learn.

Shop for school supplies together. Give your child a budget, and let him or her choose a backpack, lunch box, and other items from the supply list. Your child will feel proud to be making important decisions, and he or she will look forward to the first day, when he or she can try out all of the new supplies.

Help your child write a letter or draw a picture to give to his or her teacher on the first day. If your child is shy, it will work as a good tool for introducing himself/herself. You may want to send the teacher a note too, letting him or her know about any home issues that may affect learning, such as an ill family member or

a recent loss of a pet or loved one. If the issues are especially serious, make an appointment with the teacher so that the two of you can talk them over.

Learn the rules. Ask for a copy of the school handbook, and make sure your child understands the school rules—what he or she can and can't bring to class; when he or she can eat, play, or talk; how he or she should get the teacher's attention; and the bathroom procedures.

Discuss what you'll be doing when your child is in school. Some children have separation issues and worry about how their parents will do without them. Reassure your child that you have plenty to keep you busy and look forward to meeting him or her when school is over. Your child will learn that the school day has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Your child will better understand that, although as a parent you have responsibilities just like he or she does, you can still be relied on to be there for him or her.

Cut down on the first week of school frenzy by having everything ready ahead of time. Pack your child's lunch, and help him or her pick out a favorite outfit the night before. Lay out all of his or her clothes and supplies so that he or she can grab them first thing in the morning. In addition to reducing your stress level, getting-ready routines will help your child become a more organized student.

Ease into a school-friendly schedule.

If your child has been staying up late all summer, encourage him or her to go to bed and get up early at least two weeks before school starts. This will make the transition to getting up early for school much easier.

Talk about your child's concerns.

Provide your child opportunities to talk about things on his or her mind. If your child seems nervous about starting school but reluctant to discuss it, explain to him or her that school will be starting and ask if your child has any questions. Let him or her know that some things will be fun and easy and some a little difficult, but as a parent, you'll always be available to talk.

Find a friend. If any of your child's friends from the neighborhood will be going to the same school, arrange for him or her to walk to the bus with them or organize a carpool. Your child will see school as a fun social opportunity. If he or she doesn't know anyone, plan a play date with one of his or her future classmates so that when school starts he or she will already see at least one familiar face.

Get to school early on the first few days. Your child will have plenty of time to settle in and get used to the classroom before the hustle and bustle of the school day begins.

Jimmy Wathen
Specialist, School Readiness



Nutrition Facts

Serving Size	
6 chips and 1/2 cup dip	
Amount Per Serving	
Calories 210	Calories from Fat 15
% Daily Value*	
Total Fat 1.5g	3%
Saturated Fat 0g	0%
Cholesterol 0mg	0%
Sodium 410mg	17%
Total Carbohydrate 38g	13%
Dietary Fiber 5g	20%
Sugars 4g	
Protein 12g	
Vitamin A 6%	Vitamin C 4%
Calcium 2%	Iron 10%
*Percent Daily Values are based on a 2,000 calorie diet. Your daily values may be higher or lower depending on your calorie needs.	
Calories: 2,000 2,500	
Total Fat	Less than 30g 80g
Saturated Fat	Less than 30g 35g
Cholesterol	Less than 300mg 300mg
Sodium	Less than 2,400mg 2,400mg
Total Carbohydrate	300g 370g
Dietary Fiber	35g 30g
Calories per gram:	
Fat 9 • Carbohydrate 4 • Protein 4	

Lean Green Pita Dippers

Complete this light lunch by adding your favorite cut-up veggies or a side salad.

Prep time: 10 minutes

What you need:

- 4 whole-wheat pitas
- 1 cup fat-free plain Greek yogurt
- 1/2 cup fresh or frozen spinach
- 1/4 of cucumber, sliced
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper

Equipment needed:

- Food processor or blender
- Knife
- Baking sheet

What to do:

1. Preheat oven to 400° F.
2. Place yogurt, spinach, cucumber, salt, and pepper into food processor or blender. Process until smooth, about 1 minute.
3. Place dip into a bowl and refrigerate until chips are done.
4. Cut pitas into 8 wedges.
5. Arrange pita wedges on a baking sheet in a single layer.
6. Spray with cooking spray and sprinkle lightly with garlic powder.
7. Bake for 5 minutes or until light golden brown and crispy.
8. Use the pita wedges to scoop up the yogurt dip!

How much does this recipe make?

4 servings

Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD

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Family Meals

Family meals are making a comeback. And that's good news for a couple of reasons:

- Shared family meals are more likely to be nutritious.
- Kids who eat regularly with their families are less likely to snack on unhealthy foods and more likely to eat fruits, vegetables, and whole grains.
- Teens who take part in regular family meals are less likely to smoke, drink alcohol, or use marijuana and other drugs, and are more likely to have healthier diets as adults, studies have shown.

Beyond health and nutrition, family meals provide a valuable opportunity to reconnect. This becomes even more important as kids get older.

Making Family Meals Happen

It can be a big challenge to find the time to plan, prepare, and share family meals, then be relaxed enough to enjoy them.

Try these three steps to schedule family meals and make them enjoyable for everyone who pulls up a chair.

1. Plan

To plan more family meals, look over the calendar to choose a time when everyone can be there.



Figure out which obstacles are getting in the way of more family meals — busy schedules, no supplies in the house, no time to cook. Ask for the family's help and ideas on how these roadblocks can be removed. For instance, figure out a way to get groceries purchased for a family meal. Or if time to cook is the problem, try doing some prep work on weekends or even completely

preparing a dish ahead of time and putting it in the freezer.

2. Prepare

Once you have all your supplies on hand, involve the kids in preparations. Recruiting younger kids can mean a little extra work, but it's often worth it. Simple tasks such as putting plates on the table, tossing the salad, pouring a beverage, folding the napkins, or being a "taster" are appropriate jobs for preschoolers and school-age kids.



Older kids may be able to pitch in even more, such as getting ingredients, washing produce, mixing and stirring, and serving. If you have teens around, consider assigning them a night to cook, with you as the helper.

If kids help out, set a good example by saying please and thanks for their help. Being upbeat and pleasant as you prepare the meal can rub off on your kids. If you're grumbling about the task at hand, chances are they will too. But if the atmosphere is light, you're showing them how the family can work together and enjoy the fruits of its labor.

3. Enjoy

Even if you're thinking of all you must accomplish after dinner's done (doing dishes, making lunches, etc.), try not to focus on that during dinner. Make your time at the table pleasant and a chance for everyone to decompress from the day and enjoy being together as a family.



They may be starving, but have your kids wait until everyone is seated before digging in. Create a moment of calm before the meal begins, so the cook can shift gears. It also presents a chance to say grace, thank the cook, wish everyone a good meal, or to raise a glass of milk and toast each other. You're setting the mood and modeling good manners and patience.

Family meals are a good time to teach civilized behavior that kids also can use at restaurants and others' houses, so establish rules about staying seated, passing items instead of grabbing them, putting napkins on laps, and not talking with your mouth full.

You can gently remind when they break the rules, but try to keep tension and

discipline at a minimum during mealtime. The focus should remain on making your kids feel loved, connected, and part of the family.

Keep the interactions positive and let the conversation flow. Ask your kids about their days and tell them about yours. Give everyone a chance to talk.

Need some conversation starters? Here are a few:

- If you could have any food for dinner tomorrow night, what would it be?
- Who can guess how many potatoes I used to make that bowl of mashed potatoes?
- What's the most delicious food on the table?
- If you opened a restaurant, what kind would it be?
- Who's the best cook you know? (We hope they say it's you!)



Reviewed by: Mary L. Gavin, MD

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