

Early Learning Parents' Pages

December 2018

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Less Stress = More Holiday Happiness + Family Fun

Families are very busy and holidays can be stressful as you try to organize and balance your family's normal activities with added holiday obligations and activities. Whether you are staying at home or traveling to visit family, planning and prioritizing your time and your family's requests can make your holidays more meaningful.

Talk with your family about the upcoming holidays. If your children are old enough, ask them to tell you the activities they enjoy most during the holidays. Then discuss each activity and ask each person to choose the one they like best. List the activity, day and time each one is scheduled (example: watching a favorite holiday movie – day and time it is available for the family to watch). Be sure family activities like baking cookies or decorating the house are on the list. If more than one activity is the same day or time, decide as a family the one to include this year.

When you have young children or babies, keep family routines as normal as possible.

GINGERBREAD MAZE
Can you get the gingerbread man to his house by drawing a path from 1-10?

	1	3	5	2
10	2	4	8	9
5	3	9	7	10
3	4	5	6	

ible. Fit holiday activities into your family's schedule while keeping bedtime and meals on a regular schedule. Try to eat meals as a family and talk about special activities your family remembers about past holidays. Pace special events throughout the weeks before the holiday celebration. This gives children something to look forward to and gives you time to plan and organize special events. Bake cookies or traditional holiday food in advance and allow your child to help. It is okay if cookies or cakes are not perfect. A child made them love and happiness.



Prioritize household chores so you do essential tasks first. Give each

child age-appropriate chores to complete before the next planned special activity. Remember to thank them for helping the family complete chores so everyone can enjoy holiday activities.

When attending special events, discuss behavior expectations with your child. With young children, you need to practice the behaviors at home before the day of the event.

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Early Learning
LEARN EARLY. LEARN FOR LIFE.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

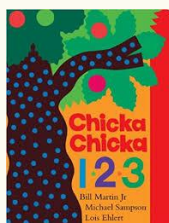
Teach Your Child Math Concepts

Young children use **math to help make sense of their world**. Learning everyday routines is the beginning of their developing mathematical thinking. Knowing that when you wake up in the morning you eat breakfast and brush your teeth, then get dressed is the beginning of developing a sense of time and sequencing events. Even babies know that when they cry, they get their diapers changed or get to eat. When you bathe your child and count her fingers and toes as you wash them, she is beginning to learn number sense. Asking your child to find two socks that match will help her learn to sort and classify, two very important math concepts.

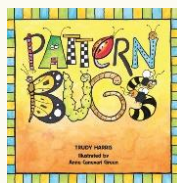
As your child's **first teacher**, your role is to connect what she is doing in her play to the math concepts she is learning. When she plays with her stuffed animals or dolls, ask her which one is the tallest or shortest. Help her put them in order from shortest to tallest. Putting together simple puzzles requires her to match shapes and sizes of the puzzle pieces. Point out the different shapes and sizes of the puzzle pieces. When she is wearing a shirt with stripes, show her the pattern in the stripes and ask her to use blocks or small toys to make patterns with you. As she rides her tricycle, talk with her about going fast or slow, driving in a straight line or going around in a circle. Point out shapes, numbers and colors on signs and on cars, trucks and buses as you ride in the car together.

Join her when she plays with playdough or sand and make numbers, shapes and patterns for her to copy or ask her to make them and you copy hers.

Reading to your child daily is very important. Reading her **books that have math concepts** in the stories is a great way to help her learn reading and math concepts at the same time. These books are great for teaching math concepts to young children.



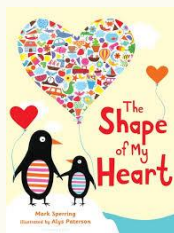
Chicka Chicka 1,2,3 by Karma Wilson – A fun book that gives children the opportunity to read, count and learn about numbers.



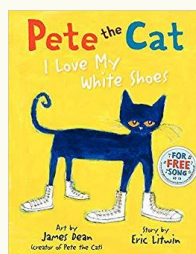
Pattern Bugs by Trudy Harris – A visual book that uses language and illustrations to show many different patterns. This is a great book for repetition and pattern learning.



A Pair of Socks by Stuart J. Murphy – A great book that teaches children about matching, specifically matching socks to one another.



The Shape of My Heart by Mark Sperring – This sweet book teaches children about the many shapes found in the world.



Pete the Cat: I Love My White Shoes by James Dean and Eric Litwin – This book is fun and always gets children excited. It's about a cat named Pete who walks down the street in his new pair of white shoes. But along the way, his shoes change colors (e.g., red, blue, brown) as he steps into different things.

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Newsletters

Finding information specific to your child's age is often frustrating. There are so many different parenting "experts" and agencies or companies with information online. How do you know the information is from a trusted source? Sometimes you may find information from nationally recognized organizations, universities, research centers or state and federal education agencies. By the time you locate the information you need, the "crisis" is over and you need information on another phase of development because your child keeps growing and changing each day.

For busy parents, there is an e-newsletter you can subscribe to specific to your child's age. It comes automatically to your email inbox each month. *Just in Time Parenting*, an educational partnership of educators and researchers from land-grant universities across the US, publishes monthly newsletters with reliable parenting information, tips and advice. The newsletters have information on your child's development, strategies for solving parenting problems, advice on children's challenging behaviors and appropriate expectations for your child's developmental level. Learn about your child's social and emotional, physical and cognitive development and find activities you can use to support your child's development in these areas.



Just in Time Parenting



Just in Time Parenting newsletters are available in English and Spanish and have no toy or product advertising. All information is based on current research by experts in child development and education. Most issues have links to podcasts, videos and other resources designed specifically for parents of young children. You can download and print many articles as pdfs so you can share them with other family members or friends.

You may subscribe to *Just in Time Parenting* newsletters as soon as you become pregnant. The newsletters are for parents starting at the prenatal stage (1st trimester, 2nd trimester, 3rd trimester) of their child's life and extending to age 5. There is a newsletter written for parents of newborns and then the issues are designed to match your child's age each month, beginning at month 1.

The newborn issue addresses what newborns are able to do, how to comfort a crying baby, breastfeeding, car seat safety, the importance of playing with your child, feeding a newborn, what to expect if your child is a "preemie" and how to cope if your child has a disability. In the month 59-60 issue, there is information about starting kindergarten, what to expect of 5-year-olds, arguing with siblings, picky eaters, raising a socially healthy child, brain development of a 5-year-old and how to manage family and work responsibilities.



The [*Just in Time Parenting* website](#) has additional resource links, articles and answers to parents' frequently asked questions. You can access information from the land-grant universities in Florida, Florida A&M University and the University of Florida, on parenting issues such as [Tips on Dealing with Stress of School Shootings](#), [Navigating Mother's Day as a Stepparent](#) and [Family Resources](#).

Early Learning Parents' Pages

Celebrate Literacy

The week of Jan. 26 -30, 2019, is **Celebrate Literacy Week**. The Florida Department of Education and Office of Early Learning invite child care providers, teachers and parents to celebrate literacy and the love of reading during this week. DOE and OEL selected two books for the **Simultaneous Read Aloud** event that will take place Wednesday, Jan. 30, 2019, at 9 a.m. (EST). Providers will read **Chicka Chicka Boom Boom** to children birth to 3 years old and **Planting a Rainbow** to 3- to 5-year-olds.

Reading begins at birth as your baby listens to you reading to him. He hears sounds that will eventually become his first words. By his first birthday, he will learn all the sounds needed to speak in his native language. The **more books you read to your baby**, the more words he hears. This will help him use more words when he is able to talk.

The most **important reason to read** to your child is the connection he makes between the things he loves (you, your voice and the closeness he feels when you read to him) and books. He begins to associate books with happiness.

As your child gets older, **ask him questions about the story** and talk with him about the pictures in the book. This helps him learn about the parts of a story and the

characters in a story. **Answer his questions about the story.**



During Celebrate Literacy Week, visit your local library or bookstore and allow him to choose some books to read or take home to read. Start a home library and make it a special place to keep books.

Less Stress = More Fun and Holiday Happiness

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If your family is attending a performance, have your child practice sitting and listening or whispering so others can hear. Talk about safety issues, such as walking instead of running, staying with the family, not talking to strangers and staying seated during the performance.

The most important part of the holidays for your child is learning about holiday traditions, starting new family traditions and interacting with family members. The best thing about holidays is the happiness and love your family experiences together.

Special dates in January

Jan. 1 New Year's Day ♦ Jan. 3 Fruitcake Toss Day ♦ Jan. 4 National Spaghetti Day & Trivia Day ♦ Jan. 5 National Bird Day ♦ Jan. 6 Bean Day & Cuddle Up Day ♦ Jan. 8 Bubble Bath Day ♦ Jan. 9 National Take the Stairs Day ♦ Jan. 10 Bittersweet Chocolate Day & Household Appreciation Day ♦ Jan. 14 Dress Up Your Pet Day ♦ Jan. 15 National Hat Day ♦ Jan. 16 Appreciate a Dragon Day ♦ Jan. 18 Winnie the Pooh Day ♦ Jan. 19 National Popcorn Day ♦ Jan. 20 National Cheese Lover Day & Penguin Awareness Day ♦ Jan. 21 Martin Luther King Jr. Birthday ♦ Jan. 23 National Pie Day ♦ Jan. 28 National Kazoo Day ♦ Jan. 29 National Puzzle Day ♦ Jan. 31 Backward Day



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