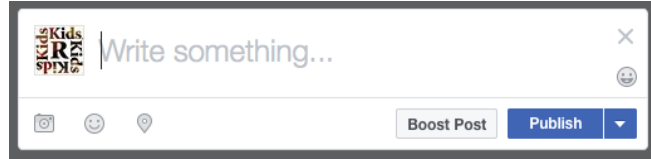


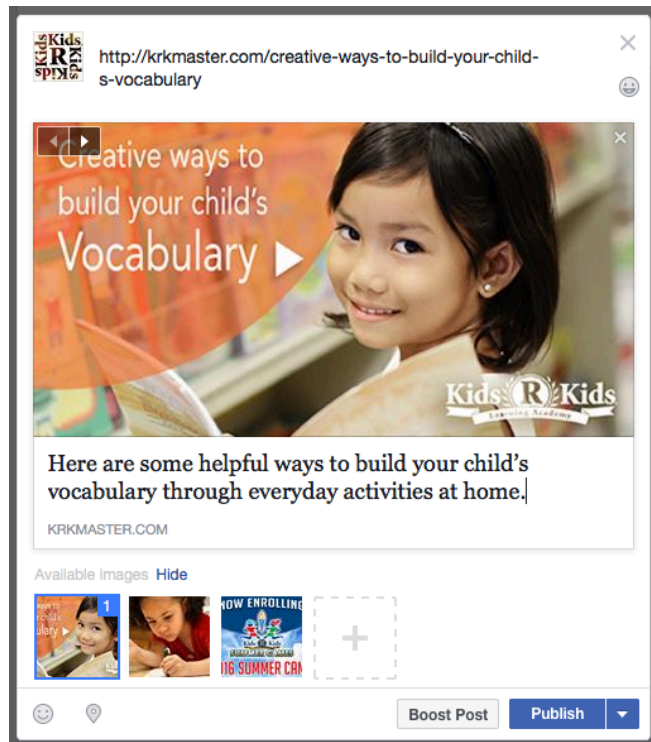
EXAMPLE OF HOW TO POST YOUR BLOG & GRAPHIC TO FACEBOOK

1. Create the blog on your KRK website with the article and image.
Copy the specific blur url.

2. Go to your Facebook page and copy the blog url to the area that says "Write something."



3. The blog will show up with image(s). It should pull up the image that are posted on your webpage. Select only the image you want to show. If it does not pull your image then you can click the Plus Sign to add your image and then select only that image. You can edit any of the copy that is showing.



4. Click Publish and then your post will appear and link back to your website blog page.



BLOG ARTICLES TO UTILIZE & CUSTOMIZE FOR YOUR SCHOOL:

Balancing Your Child's Use of Technology

Young children and even toddlers are surprisingly proficient at using technology. You don't have to search long or hard before coming into contact with a young child playing with mom's phone in the grocery store, at a local park, or in the airport. With such a compelling distraction it can be very tempting to just hand a child a tablet or phone to keep them occupied, especially when in public. While a little bit of screen time in your child's day is by no means detrimental, like every other aspect of parenting it should be done in moderation. Will your child's brain crumble after watching a few episodes of his favorite cartoon while you do the dishes? No. Does your child's brain respond differently to screens than to other surfaces or toys? Yes.



It's important to understand just how impressionable and formative a child's brain is in the first 5 years of his life. Did you know that those first 5 years will lay the foundation for the rest of your child's learning capability? Before panicking and throwing away every electronic device in your home, take a deep breath and remember—everything in moderation!

Since this can be a tricky topic to navigate, let's get practical with 3 ways you can help your child manage his or her exposure to electronics throughout the day.

Avoid using the electronic device as a reward or punishment tool. If the child only gets the tablet when he's "good" then you may be amazed at how angelic your child becomes! But if the tablet or phone is taken away before the child is ready, it will likely cause a meltdown and the child may associate the removal of the tablet with bad behavior—even if that isn't why you're taking it away!

Schedule TV/tablet time as a regular part of the day. Instead of using it as a bargaining chip, treat tablet or phone usage as something associated with a particular time of day. For example, do you have a toddler who still takes naps during the day and also an older sibling who no longer requires a nap? Use that naptime as "quiet time" for your older child and give your child the tablet to play with during that time and only during that time. They may fuss when you remove the tablet but they know—there will be quiet time tomorrow!

Don't leave the TV on all day. If nobody in the home is watching the TV, turn it off! If you enjoy having some kind of background noise on, turn on a radio and play music. Children are immediately drawn to the moving pictures on a TV or tablet so by eliminating that distraction it

will encourage your child to find other ways to occupy his or her time such as going outside to play, reading a book, or playing with other toys.

Technology can be a great asset for parents and children! There are so many educational opportunities to utilize and many shows for children that teach great social skills. It is important not make technology the boss of the house. With healthy boundaries and clear expectations, you and your children can find a rhythm with iPads and iPhones and TV that will not jeopardize your child's growth or development.

At Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies, pre-k and preschool students enjoy learning with the interactive and innovative SmartBoard technology! The exclusive STEAM AHEAD® curriculum offered only at Kids 'R' Kids also works to equip each child with a firm foundation in Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math! Contact a Kids 'R' Kids in your area for a free tour and more information on how they can meet and exceed your childcare expectations!

Chores for Kids Don't Have to Be a Chore for Parents

Chores can help children learn responsibility. However, establishing an effective chore system requires some effort from parents. We put together a list of pitfalls for parents to avoid when it comes to chores.

Don't be stingy with praise. Don't wait until your child is finished with a chore to praise him or her for a job well done.

Encourage your child throughout the process and congratulate progress! Praise is often a better motivator than money.

Don't insist on perfection. Your child is still learning what "clean" really means, so don't be hard on him or her when there are still streaks on the window and dust in the corners. And by no means, don't jump in and do the chore instead of your child. That undermines the whole point of chores!

Don't make chores boring. Turn on some music or make a game out of it! Laugh and dance as you put away toys, sort dirty laundry, and load the dishwasher. Doing so teaches children that responsibility can be fun.

Don't wait too long. Some parents think their children are too young for chores. However, there are plenty of age-appropriate tasks even your two-year-old can do!



Don't be inconsistent. Establishing a chore system for children can feel like a chore for adults. As a parent, remind yourself to remind your child about chores. When you don't set clear expectations and or follow through, you are communicating to your child that chores are not really that important. If chores are important to you, they will become important to your child.

At Kids 'R' Kids, we make sure children are cared for and nurtured in an age-appropriate environment that fosters the process of learning responsibility. We offer programs for toddlers, preschoolers and school-age children that make even chores a fun classroom activity!

10 Creative Ideas for Making Memories with Dad

With the return to a school routine and the busyness of fall activities, it can be easy for parents to rarely see their kids! Yet, it's important for parents to spend quality time with their children when they get the chance. At Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies, we applaud every parent who makes an effort to be present. We know it isn't always easy, yet the efforts made by parents to connect with their children will go a long way into developing healthy, secure, and contributing members of society.



While it may seem that moms spend most of the time with children, a recent study conducted by the Pew Research Center indicated an increase in the number of stay-at-home dads. The role a father plays in a child's life is irreplaceable and spending time with your children, as a father figure, can do a lot to build a child's self-esteem. Despite living in a culture that equates busyness with success, we fully support and encourage dads who take the time to slow down and get to know their children! That's why we put together a list of "Daddy Date" activities, to assist you in creating memories and bonds that will last a lifetime.

We encourage dads and children to choose from this list or adapt these ideas in a way that would mean something special for your own family.

1. Go on a bike ride.
2. Have a water gun fight in your backyard.
3. Go on a mini-golf adventure.
4. Go to a nearby ice cream shop and enjoy a sweet treat.
5. Wash the car together.
6. Bake cookies together.
7. Have a picnic at a nearby park.
8. Pick out presents for each other at the dollar store.
9. Go bowling.
10. Pick up a book from the public library and read it together.

Every day is an opportunity to make a memory, large or small. Every act of intentionality with your kids goes a long way in shaping them into confident, successful, and thoughtful adults.

Creative Ways to Build Your Child's Vocabulary

A few months after a beautiful baby is born, parents begin to hear exciting sounds of joy and personal expression. A toddler's use of words can be adorable and entertaining as your child learns to use new words and communicate. While it's entertaining to watch a growing toddler use a variation of a word, as a child enters preschool the vocabulary is expected to increase. Better

communication and increased vocabulary does not happen automatically. It requires intentional learning and an excellent curriculum in childcare, daycare, or preschool. Parental support is also beneficial. Learning happens in a balanced, loving, and nurturing environment.



At Kids 'R' Kids, we understand every stage of learning. Our curriculum is designed to help your child develop through our infant, and toddler programs, to our preschool, pre-k, and after school programs. At Kids 'R' Kids, children enjoy lessons designed to increase vocabulary, build better communication, and much more!

We understand the commitment of our parents to complement the learning experience at home. Here are some helpful ways to build your child's vocabulary through everyday activities at home.

Be a careful listener. It may take time for your child to express himself. Listen carefully and allow your child to take the needed time to communicate.

When speaking to your child, use real words. It may be fun to use "play words," but as your child learns and grows, take the opportunity to use real words for your child to repeat and understand. While some "play words" are cute, they can be confusing and stifle vocabulary.

Ask plenty of probing questions. Your questions will create opportunities for your child to think, reason, and express himself better.

Encourage your child regularly. Always look for opportunities to affirm and encourage your child. Respond with care and thoughtfulness as your child learns to express thoughts and feelings.

Keep your baby talking and making sounds. Your baby is growing and developing in many ways. Engaging activities, talking, and fun interactions are ways your child learns and develops. Even though your baby may not understand your words, he will recognize your voice and body language.

Read to your child regularly. Choose a fun book appropriate for your child's age and read regularly. Your child will begin to recognize and repeat words. Also discuss what the words mean.

While Kids 'R' Kids provides an excellent preschool learning experience, parents love to join the learning process. These simple steps will support your child's learning along with our excellent curriculum. Our STEAM AHEAD® curriculum is an integrated project-based curriculum written for students ages three to five, providing them with opportunities to be creative, innovative, and ingenious—learning to use problem-solving skills, critical thinking skills, and best of all, finding the “ah ha” moments in our five core areas of education.

Learn more about the many ways we support your child, with our dynamic curriculum, excellent programs, and qualified teachers and staff. We hope you will contact us to learn more about our commitment to advanced learning, increased vocabulary, and our overall educational success that is far beyond a daycare or childcare.

Creative Ways to Support Your Child's Learning and Development

How a child grows and develops is an amazing process! From birth most children automatically know many simple yet life sustaining skills like swallowing, crying, and eventually smiling. It's not long before the toddler is mobile and busy exploring the environment. Although some learning is natural like eating, walking, and laughing, most of your child's early learning will be the result of deliberate, well-planned educational experiences, usually in daycare, childcare, preschool, or at home.



While a formal learning experience is crucial for your child's development, there are many informal ways to learn that will also support your child.

Here are some valuable ways that parents can support their child's learning experience:

Talk to your child's daycare, childcare, or preschool about the curriculum they are using.

Ask what you can do at home to support the learning experience. If your child is learning a

foreign language or new skill, create opportunities for your child to demonstrate and practice what is being learned.

Have engaging conversations with your child that gives your child an opportunity to tell you how she feels or what she thinks. Ask questions like, “What did you learn in preschool today? Why do you think he did that? How do you like this?” The goal is to help your child create a pattern of thinking, communicating, and reasoning during normal activities and events.

Learn through everyday activities. Informal learning can happen in many different ways. If you are preparing a meal, show your preschooler how to measure the ingredients. If you are planning a trip, let your child look at pictures, hear you talk about where to go and what to do when you arrive. If you attend a sporting event, talk about what’s happening in the game, discuss the rules of good sportsmanship and the history of the sport.

Your child learns at home in school, from the environment, and many other ways. With informal learning and the well-planned strategies of an accredited preschool program, infants, toddlers, and preschool children have an advantage that continues throughout their educational experience. When parents support the educational process learning becomes a positive experience that children enjoy. With parental support, your child’s educational experience can become fun and exciting, creating a roadmap for ongoing educational excellence.

Daddy Daughter Day Out

There are few things more beautiful than the adoration a loving father has toward a young daughter. From the moment a father’s eyes gaze upon his beautiful infant, he usually finds himself captured by her beauty and the desire to protect and provide.

Eventually, the daughter begins to grow into a toddler, then a preschooler with ideas, dreams, and personal preferences.



Preschool age is an excellent time for a father and daughter to spend valuable time together sharing thoughts, fun, and laughter. One great activity for both to enjoy is a daddy and daughter day together.

Take a look at these fun ideas for a daddy daughter day.

- Go to an arcade and enjoy games, bowling, and dinner. Make it a fun and exciting night by trying a new dish together.
- Look for a festival or outdoor event that you can both enjoy. Look for an opportunity to experiment with something new together.

- Have a cookout and invite some of your daughter's friends to enjoy the food. Daddy and daughter will have quality time preparing the food and the friends will help finish the evening.
- Dress up and go to a play that your child will enjoy.
- Help your daughter decorate her room. Let her look at pictures and choose her own colors and décor.
- Enjoy an outside activity together.
- Ask your daughter what she wants to do and do it together.

The fun of a daddy and daughter day lies in the quality of the relationship between the father and daughter. To build a closer relationship and make the day memorable, be sure to keep it encouraging and fun. Use the day to let your daughter know how proud she makes you. Tell her how beautiful she is and how glad you are to be her father. Use this valuable time to become your daughter's best listener and confidant.

Developing Lifelong Learners through Extracurricular Activities

Well-planned extracurricular activities can help enhance your child's learning experience and overall development. Children learn most when they are given new and challenging experiences that expand their knowledge and broaden their skillsets. It's important to encourage your child to explore and try a variety of extracurricular activities to promote development, enrichment and boost confidence!



Extracurricular activities are especially beneficial for social development. Any time children are encouraged to work together and share ideas, they are fostering important social skills like teamwork and friendship. Kids 'R' Kids offers children the opportunity to learn these valuable skills through our health and fitness challenge, foreign language classes, dance, music, and technology.

Extracurricular activities also benefit cognitive development. Cognitive development has to do with a child's ability to think and reason. Any activity that promotes thinking skills, like learning a foreign language or engaging in technology, enhances brain development. Kids 'R' Kids provides children the opportunity to learn multiple languages as well as managing values of diversity and communication. Lessons and games using a variety of technology components also continues to expand a child's understanding that learning can happen anywhere.

Children also benefit emotionally and physically from extracurricular activities. Children who are consistently challenged with learning new skills grow to become more confident, coordinated, and creative. Activities that encourage hard work and collaboration with peers

foster a sense of pride and accomplishment for children to share with each other, while physical activities contribute to increased fitness, agility, strength, and even academic performance. Kids 'R' Kids provides music and dance classes for children to express themselves in a healthy and safe environment

As a parent, you want to see your child grow and flourish. Extracurricular activities can help your child be more physically active, alert, and imaginative. By enrolling your child in one of our special programs, you are helping your child develop into a healthy and active lifelong learner.

Finding Quiet Moments to Relax

With the holidays over, children back to school, and holiday decorations put away, parents can finally relax and hopefully find some quiet moments to rest. A busy working parent's day can easily be filled from the early morning hours before the children are awake to late at night well after the children are snuggled in their beds. With preparing meals, cleaning, dropping off at preschool, attending sporting events, volunteering at a daycare or childcare, settling disputes, and helping with homework, a parent can easily use up an entire day and never stop to rest.



While the busyness may not go away anytime soon, there are creative ways to be still and take a break. Take a look at these ideas for finding quiet moments to relax.

Take short naps. While several hours of quiet time would be nice, a short nap can be very beneficial. If you have an infant, consider taking a nap when your baby is sleeping.

Participate in an after school program. Check with a preschool in your area and see if they offer an after school program, you can get a break and your children can enjoy a safe environment along with homework help.

Implement a “Mommy Time” rule. Select a designated time for you to unwind. This time has to be carefully planned and explained to your family. Plan ahead to make sure the children have what they need and toddlers and infants are in a safe place. Then retreat to your room and enjoy your planned rest time. If anyone knocks on your door to ask a question, remind them, “This is Mommy Time.” Let them know that you will be available when Mommy Time is over.

Plan a parents’ night out. On a parent’s night out, parents rotate keeping each other’s children while the other parents enjoy some quiet time or a night out.

Implement a rest time for the entire family. Look for a time on the weekend, when everyone is home. Family rest time means that everyone retreats to their beds for a nap or rest. Plan your rest time when everyone's schedule is clear and after lunch or dinner. School-aged children may desire alternatives like reading or watching a movie.

For more information about before and after school programs and other beneficial opportunities for parents of preschool children, contact a Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academy near you. They understand the needs of families with children.

Fun Ideas for Family Reading Time

Reading is one of the most beneficial early learning activities you can enjoy with your infant, toddler, or preschool child. Reading opens new pathways to possibilities and adventure by engaging the imagination and creating fun journeys beyond everyday experiences. Reading together is also a great way for parents to help their children build an advanced vocabulary while spending quality time together.



The many benefits of reading include better communication and speaking skills, enhanced critical thinking skills, increased concentration, self-esteem, and overall language mastery. The future benefits in elementary school and beyond will also be evident through higher test scores and better comprehension of other core subjects. The many benefits of early reading are so important; parents can't afford not to read with their children.

From stories about animals and fictional characters to adventure and suspense, reading can be a pathway to discovery, imagination, and lots of fun for children and adults. Creating an interest will be much easier if reading is fun and engaging.

As you read, make the characters come alive. Create a funny voice and grab some props. Choose a reading time when you are not distracted by other responsibilities and your child has no activities planned. If you or your child feel tired, select a better time.

Give your child your undivided attention during reading time. Put away your electronic devices and turn off the television or music. Your attention will demonstrate to your child how much you care about your time together.

Let your children help choose the book and get comfortable. If it's cool, grab a warm blanket and enjoy a snack while reading.

Reading is an activity that can be fun with very little effort. With a good book, a little creativity, and quality time together, you can help prepare your child for an excellent educational future with your fun reading time ideas.

For more great ideas for enjoying reading with your infant, toddler, or preschool child, talk to the experts at Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies. They understand how a child's brain develops and the many benefits of early reading.

Fun Ways to Celebrate Valentine's Day with Your Children

Valentine's Day isn't just a holiday reserved for happy couples; it's a great time to celebrate all kinds of love! As a family, take some time together to celebrate the love you have for each other.

Here are 3 ideas for building some fun family Valentine's Day traditions:

Decorate your house with Valentines from years past. As your children grow older they will love seeing the valentines they made when they were younger. It's a great way to reminisce about years gone by.

Make dinner. If you want to save Valentine's Day dinner for a nice get-together with your spouse, plan one dinner around February 14th that will be a special dinner with the family. Decorate the table with flowers, light some candles and make some heart-shaped desserts. It may seem cheesy, but your family will feel very loved and will remember how important it is to value each other.

Make extra valentines to pass out to people you meet during the day. Obviously, only do this with older children who are able to discern people they meet (like a grocery clerk or mailman) from someone who may not be safe to approach. Spend the week passing out valentines and share stories over dinner about how people responded. Everyone loves to be loved!



Fun Ways to Enhance Your Bedtime Storytelling Experience

There are few moments more special than a bedtime story told while a child snuggles under the covers listening to a great story shared by a loving parent. As children get older, they often remember dialogue from stories they shared at bedtime when they were younger. Even as a child gets older, the bedtime story tradition can continue with a few modifications to increase interest for older children and even adults.



Take a look at these creative ideas to enhance your bedtime story experience for toddlers, preschoolers and older children.

- Choose an appropriate book for your child's age. Younger children will need more sounds, visual stimulation, and animated characters. They should not be frightened or given content meant for older children.
- To make story time fun, make weird sounds just like the book. Give your characters a fun voice and make the reading exciting.
- Engage your child by asking for help with sounds and words.
- For younger children, feel free to read the same book more than once. They will enjoy the familiarity and will eventually be able to remember the story and tell you what comes next.
- Create a routine by allowing your child to snuggle in bed with eager anticipation of a warm story to end the day.
- For older children, you may need to change the name from bedtime stories to Family Reading Time (or choose your own name). Select stories that are appropriate for preschool age children with deeper storylines and more interesting characters. Share the reading with your child and ask questions about the characters and theme.
- Story time does not have to happen in the bed. Older children may prefer to read in a family room with snacks and relaxation.
- Check online for bedtime stories and other fun ideas for your family story time.

While bedtime storytelling is fun for children and adults, the benefits are numerous and lasting. For more information on reading to children and the many benefits, talk to the childhood education experts at Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies. You might be surprised to know how easy it is to enhance your child's learning during story time at home and in preschool.

Getting Rid of Boredom

The great advantage of having fun is that it can happen anywhere and at anytime. It's easy to have fun at an amusement park or a sporting event. Birthday parties and field trips are designed to be enjoyable for children. But what happens when there is nothing readily available when your preschooler utters those infamous words "I'm bored"?



Totally eliminating the words "I'm bored" might be a task that's difficult to accomplish. But there are simple ways to manage the boredom and have fun with your preschooler, even when there appears to be nothing interesting to do.

Take a look at these simple ways to laugh and have more fun with your preschooler.

- Simplify the conversation. Instead of talking about eating vegetables or behavior problems, have a fun conversation about subjects like toys, or movies and super heroes.
- Play some upbeat music and dance or sing a song together.
- Look for items in the kitchen and use them as musical instruments. Then play your own music together.
- Have a movie night at home. Place blankets on the floor with snacks, flashlights, and your child's favorite movie.
- Have a sleep over. Invite your child's best friend over for the night.
- Let your child style your hair.
- Give each other manicures and pedicures.
- Play a board game and make up your own rules.

There are countless ways to have fun when you are willing to laugh and play with your child. Even after a long day at work, laughter can be a welcome relief for you and your child. The benefits of laughter go much further than entertaining your child. There are emotional and physical benefits for adults as well.

For more information on fun activities to enjoy with your preschooler, contact us at Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies. Our programs offer much more than a normal childcare or daycare. Find out how we use engaging and innovative activities to make learning fun.

Helpful Solutions for Sibling Bullying

All siblings disagree at some point. For most children, the disagreements are small and easily resolved. For some children, the disagreements can escalate into more serious behavior, even bullying.

Families typically comprise children with different ages, varying personalities, social habits, and talents.

They communicate differently and have different emotions and tolerance levels. Each child, with their own individuality and ideas, seeks to have a voice and a place within the family structure. Disagreements and squabbles will naturally occur. As mentioned earlier, most will be small, but some may need your intervention.



One study found that approximately 32% of children surveyed reported being bullied within the past twelve months, according to experts. The research also found little difference in the effects of peer bullying and sibling bullying. Both can be equally as devastating to a child. The challenge for a parent is to recognize when harmless squabbles have elevated to offensive bullying.

Answer these 4 questions to find red flags that may be signs of sibling bullying.

Does one of your children seem to exercise power over another child?

If you notice an imbalance of power where a dominate child seems to control a quiet child, pay attention. Watch for signs of physical and emotional hurt. Pay special attention when property is taken or threats are made. Those can be very serious offenses that create long term emotional scars. In this case intervention is a must.

Is the controlling event beginning to escalate?

A situation can start as light-hearted and harmless teasing or playing and quickly escalate to more aggressive behavior. If you hear insults, threats, or hurtful belittling, it's time to intervene and stop the behavior.

Has your child's personality or behavior changed?

Sometimes a bullied child doesn't know how to communicate his concerns and tries to keep it to himself. He can fear the consequences that may occur when the aggressive sibling learns he has told the parents. The confusion, stress, and hurt can lead to depression and other changes in behavior. When you notice a significant change in your child, don't assume all is well. Sometimes it's normal growth and development, but other times it can be a sign of a more serious matter. It's always good to check for yourself.

Does your child seem threatened or afraid of a future event?

A little nervousness regarding a future event is normal for anyone. When a child experiences stress about an event that should be simple, it's good to ask more questions. Make sure the pressure is not a result of a fear of consequences from a sibling.

Anytime a child becomes distant and isolated, ask questions and stay connected. When you see unexplained physical symptoms like a bruise or stomach ache, it's definitely time to intervene. Communicate with your child and seek real answers. If you feel that you have done all that you know to do and nothing is working, don't give up. Seek help and continue to work with a professional and your family until the issue is resolved and the sibling relationship is healthy again.

How to Boost Your Child's Imagination

Summer is in full swing, and there are still several weeks left for your child to enjoy the carefree days. You may have already heard the words "I'm bored!" from your preschooler or school-age child, and it's time to combat those sentiments with some creativity!

Many childhood experts comment that children benefit from periods of boredom because it forces them to get creative with what they have and where they are in order to entertain themselves. In today's culture, many have bought into the notion that a bored child is a neglected child, and family and friends should pull out all the stops (or iPads!) to entertain the child. On the contrary, when a child experiences boredom, it's an open door to try something new, take risks, and make new friends.

If you have a nearby outdoor area that's safe for children, going outside is a great option for bored children. Whether it's climbing trees, playing tag, or just digging up "treasures" in the dirt—being outdoors is a great remedy for restless hands and feet.

Sometimes the weather doesn't permit outdoor adventures. When that happens, give your child some simple tools to make memories and watch your house transform into a dragon's lair, a princess's castle, or a department store filled with homemade drawings and crafts! Crafts are a big hit with toddlers, preschoolers, and even elementary-school children—especially when given free rein over the creativity. Empty paper towel rolls may become swords, bed sheets are fair game for capes and flying carpets, and construction paper may find its way haphazardly dangling off of the mischievous brow of your previously "bored" pirate king.



Next time your preschooler or school-age child is tempted to gravitate toward the TV or iPad to relieve their boredom, point them to the great outdoors or to the abandoned bin of dress-up clothes. You may face some resistance, but eventually the boredom will lead your child to stretch her imagination—a win for everybody!

At Kids ‘R’ Kids, our exclusive preschool curriculum provides plenty of space for children to be creative as they explore the world. Our enthusiastic team of teachers makes each child feel welcomed and loved—from our infants to our after-school students. We offer so much more than a daycare or childcare experience—we give each child a firm First Step to Higher Education® that will propel them to academic success. Enroll your child into our excellent preschool program today!

Is Your Child Ready for a Pet?

Whether a family is known for fun, laughter, and activity, or for quietly relaxing at home, adding a pet to the family can be an extremely rewarding experience. Pets can be excellent companions for preschoolers and adults bringing love and joy into your home and heart. While pets are a joy for a family, they require care and provisions, especially when children are involved.



Before bringing your first pet home, take a look at these ideas to prepare your child to help care for her new friend:

Prepare your house indoors and outdoors. Remove any potentially dangerous items from your pet’s reach.

Decide on duties to care for your pet. Who will feed, walk, bathe, clean, and provide medical care? Your child will be happy to provide the fun.

Do your research. Learn about your pet. What should you expect? Will he need any specific care?

Discuss its diet. What are the foods that are good for your pet to eat and the foods that should be off limits? Be sure your child understands the need to adhere to the correct diet.

Decide on the spaces in your home or outside where your pet is welcome.

Will you need additional provisions for travel or bad weather days?

Does your pet need to be trained? If so, communicate with your child so she understands how to be consistent with the training efforts.

Establish rules. Set family rules for your new pet and communicate your expectations to your child.

While owning a pet is a wonderful experience, there are also many responsibilities associated with welcoming your child's new friend. With proper planning, bringing a new pet into your home will be a great learning experience full of fun and excitement.

Outdoor Activities That the Whole Family Can Enjoy

Your children have likely had enough rainy day indoor activities and are ready for some serious outdoor fun! As the grass dries out and the weather gets warmer, take your children outside to run around, play, and soak up the sunshine. There are many options for outdoor activities, but some of them take a little bit more planning and creativity. Here are a few outdoor activities that require very minimal planning and preparation.



Whatever you choose to do with your children, remember that quality time spent with them is more important than the activity you actually end up doing!

Plan a scavenger hunt. Before you go out to your favorite park or nature area, make a list of items for your child to find or do when you get there. It can be as easy as “Find a tree with flowers on it,” “Find a dandelion,” or “Do 10 jumping jacks!” The goal is to keep your child occupied and active! If you want to encourage some healthy competition, set a timer and reward the child who completes the scavenger hunt first!

Pitch a tent and have a campout in the backyard. If you have a backyard, take your kids outside for a campout. Pitch a tent, bring out some sandwiches and lemonade, and pretend you're in the middle of a forest. When it gets dark, look for shooting stars, and maybe even tell spooky stories!

Get out the chalk and make sidewalk art. This outdoor activity requires nothing more than colored chalk and a sidewalk. All you have to do is pick out a shady area and let your child's

imagination go wild! To spice things up, pick a theme for your sidewalk chalk art. Tell your child to create a fairytale land with castles, dragons, and princesses. Or create a zoo with giraffes and monkeys!

Go on a nature safari. Is there a creek near your home? A lake? Or even a wooded area? Pack some binoculars, a sketch pad and a glass jar, and go exploring! Ask your child to be extra quiet as you observe different types of birds, squirrels, and other critters. Pay attention to different types of flowers and plants that are sprouting out of the ground. If you come across an interesting bug, or even a frog, help your child scoop it up in a jar and look at it up close. If your child is artsy, give him time to draw the critter in his sketch pad before returning it to its natural habitat.

At Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies, we value outdoor fun, creativity, and imagination. That's why each of our centers is equipped with age appropriate outdoor play areas with state-of-the-art equipment. Children have scheduled times in the morning and afternoon to explore the outside world in a safe environment with supervision. Schedule a tour today to check out the facilities of any of our Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies!

Easter Egg Hunt Ideas

It's that time of year again. Time for Easter egg hunts! Scouting for brightly colored eggs filled with jellybeans is fun, but did you know it can also be educational? Children of all ages can learn important skills from participating in an egg hunt. Whether you're planning to go to an egg hunt hosted by your community center or church, or you're hosting your own, check out these creative ideas to keep your child's body and mind healthy and active!

While some of the ideas work better for toddlers or preschoolers, all children can learn healthy competition from participating in an Easter egg hunt. Before your children participate in an egg hunt, remind them to be kind and respectful to other children participating. Teach your children to be competitive without being mean. Remind children that collecting the most eggs is not the point of the activity. Having fun is!

Easter egg hunts for toddlers.



Toddlers can learn colors. Before letting your toddler loose to find as many plastic eggs as possible, tell your toddler only to collect a specific color of egg. This will help your toddler distinguish between different colors and make the game more challenging!

Toddlers can learn shapes. If you're creating your own egg hunt, fill plastic eggs with differently shaped objects. After the eggs are all found, reward your child for naming each of the shapes in his or her eggs.

Easter egg hunts for preschoolers.

Preschoolers can learn numbers. If you're creating your own egg hunt, use a permanent marker to number the plastic eggs before hiding them. Challenge your children to find the eggs in order from 1 to 20, or 1 to 100 if you're that ambitious!

Preschoolers can learn words. Fill plastic eggs with pieces of paper with words your child is learning to recognize. After the eggs are all found, reward your child for being able to read all the words in his or her eggs.

Preschoolers can learn teamwork. Fill plastic eggs with puzzle pieces. After all the eggs are collected, have the children work together to build the puzzle. Reward children for their team work!

Navigating Thanksgiving Dinner with Kids

It's hard to believe that Thanksgiving is coming up so soon! Families across the nation are preparing for the fun, food, and fellowship that comes this time each year. If your gathering includes infants, toddlers, and preschool children, then you will likely have a special section or table reserved just for them.

At Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies, we know children bring wonder and magic to the holiday season. However, expecting children to sit quietly for the entire duration of the Thanksgiving feast is like telling a tornado to stay put! With all the different personalities and ages around the table, it's no surprise it can be a challenge. The good news is with a little creativity and flexibility, everyone can enjoy a nice meal and mom may even be able to eat her food while it's still warm—imagine that!

Set clear expectations. First of all, if your child is old enough to understand your instructions, explain how the dinner will work. Many children get restless because they don't know when the end is in sight. Say something like, "Mommy and daddy will be eating for the next hour, but



after we're finished we can go back outside together." This will make that hour feel less like an eternity. It doesn't necessarily guarantee a whine-free experience, but it can help! Clear expectations are a must when communicating with young children.

Incorporate their interests. Once you have established the structure of the dinner, be sure to have some fun activities at the kids' table to occupy young minds. Know your audience—are you entertaining preschool children? Toddlers? What are their interests? Sports? Disney movies? You don't need to go overboard, but having some stickers or coloring sheets with favorite characters at the table are sure to be a big hit!

Use simple décor. One of the best options when setting a table for children is to use a paper tablecloth and provide crayons for some fun, spontaneous doodling. Paper or plastic utensils and place settings will save everyone from unnecessary headaches as well. If you have older school-age children at the table, you can make the meal an educational experience with Turkey Time Trivia, using the turkeys as fun place setting decorations!

How to Create a Budget for the Holiday Season

Special occasions will always arise. From holidays and birthdays to graduations and weddings, each occasion requires special attention, time, and financial resources. Adults and children of every nationality, age, and culture enjoy being recognized for their accomplishments and celebrating the milestones of friends and loved ones. It can be difficult to participate at a desired level when you lack the funds to pay for travel, gifts, food, and entertainment. That's why it's important to plan ahead and create a budget allowing adequate funds to enjoy the celebration without limitations.

Here are some helpful ideas to create your family budget for holidays and special occasions.

To avoid overspending, always consider how spending affects your overall cash flow. Before you spend, meet with your family to discuss your budget and plans. Communicate clearly and help your family develop realistic expectations.

- For holidays, discuss the true meaning of the celebration beyond purchasing gifts and toys.
- Always pay your bills and monthly obligations first, then record the amount of money you have left. Use this amount as a base for your spending budget.
- Make a spending list naming each item you plan to purchase. Then determine the normal cost of each item.
- Seek to lower the cost by finding sales, negotiating, and comparing prices.
- Consider less costly options for each item on your list.
- For holidays, talk to your children about your spending plans and what to expect from you. If gifts will be limited, creatively maintain the spirit of the day, even when your budget is limited. Seek new ways to make others feel loved without overspending.
- Feel free to remove items from your list that you can't buy at this time.

- Stick to your commitments.

Use this plan to prepare for the next big day and save ahead. Creating and managing a budget uses life skills that begin very early in preschool.

Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies understands the need for children to learn valuable life skills beginning with infants and toddlers and preschoolers. The curriculum includes math and reasoning skills development, preparing for better future decision making, including managing money. To learn more about how to employ life skills into your family's daily activities, talk to the staff at a Kids 'R' Kids Learning Academies.

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