



Helping families and schools work together for the benefit of young children

Parents Are First Teachers

You are your child's first and most important teachers.

You know your children better than anyone else does. You are with them a lot. You have a special interest in their welfare. You want what is best for them. You are their first role model, the first persons from whom they hear language, the first to feed and dress them. They come to you for comfort when they are hurt. They count on you to keep them safe and warm.

When your children start to school, they already know how to walk, how to talk, how to get things they need by asking for them. They learned at home, eagerly. Children naturally love to learn, because they want to make sense of their world.

Remember when they started to walk? Those first steps were pretty wobbly, but you didn't say "No, don't do it that way. That's wrong, and you'll fall." You smiled, and applauded, and carried on as if no child had ever

before done this thing called walking nearly so well!

Children learn most and best in that kind of loving, supporting, approving environment. They learn through discovery. Playing with blocks they learn about sizes, shapes, and colors. They notice how things are related to each other. They pretend: a stick becomes a horse to be ridden; a cardboard box becomes a TV set.

Play is the very foundation for academic learning. It is children's work, their time to explore, their chance to develop muscle skills. Parents sometimes worry that their children's early school experiences don't look serious. They wonder where the workbooks are.

Researchers have found that memorization and drill, rather than being good preparation for later schooling, may cause children to miss important steps in development. So don't worry if your child's early schooling doesn't look like work. Play is children's work--some of the most important work they will ever do.



Time With Your Child

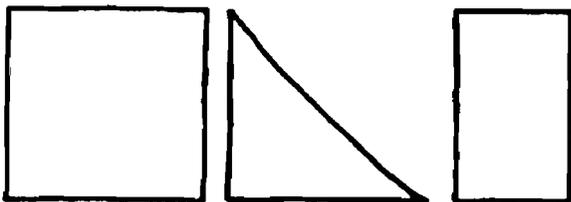
The time you spend with your child offers many opportunities for learning. He or she likes to be with you, and likes to help you in your daily activities.

It may actually take longer to do some-

thing when your child is “helping,” but important learning takes place. And your child feels valued when you devote the time and offer praise for the accomplishment.

The Activity:

Setting the table for dinner is one example. A napkin, cloth or paper, is a square. The child can fold a napkin for each place at the table. One fold can make the napkin into a triangle. A different fold creates a rectangle. You can demonstrate how to fold the napkin and say the word triangle or rectangle.



What's Happening:

The child is beginning to learn shapes, an important concept in mathematics. If you show him how to put a napkin on the left side of each place at the table and a spoon on the right, he begins to see left to right, a component of learning to read.

The most important thing about such learning opportunities is that they occur naturally and are enjoyable to you and your child. Your time and attention make a real difference to your child's development.

Wishing Together

This is a nice activity at bedtime. It will help develop your child's imagination, and remind you of some of the magic of childhood. It will also help you and your child get to know each other better.

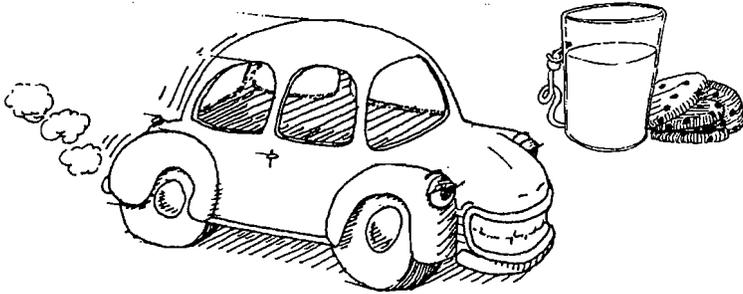
You say: “Do you know what I would wish for if I had one magic wish? I would wish for,
_____”

“What would you wish for if you had one magic wish?”



I Can Be A Car

Children love to pretend. Read "I Can Be A Car" aloud. Put your child's name before "says." Then have your child follow the directions as you read the poem again, pausing to allow time for the "car" to start, stop, turn and follow the other directions. You can add more things to do if you want to. Take turns with your child. You be the car and let your child drive you!



I can be a car, _____ says.

You may drive me
If you're careful.

Tell me when to start
When to stop
When to turn, and which way.

I can back up
and turn around.

I can go pretty fast
And verrrry slow.

Cookies and milk
Will keep my engine going.

You Are Somebody Special

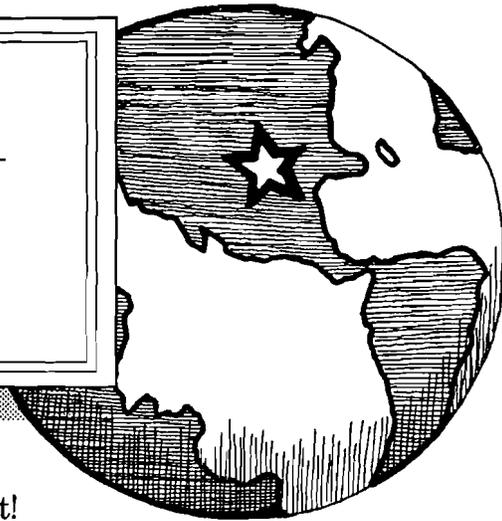
Do you know who you are?

You are somebody special

You're _____
(your child's name)

and

There's nobody else just like you.



Think of it!

Nobody else exactly like you in the whole, wide world.

Travel Planner

You can go to many places
On a plane, or a bus, or a boat.
You can go by camel caravan,
Or a cart that's pulled by a goat.

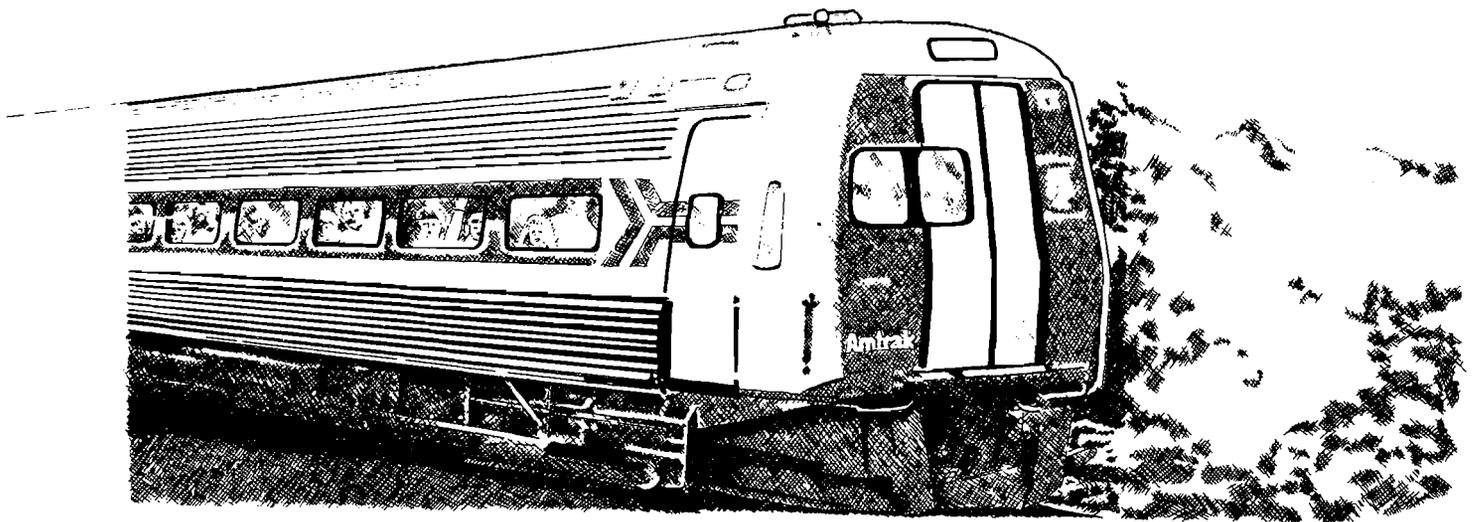
If you choose to be an astronaut,
Your space ship can leave the Earth.
Or you could go in an Amtrak car,
And sleep in the upper berth.

Some people travel on horseback,
Or a bicycle built for two.
Some fly high in a hot-air balloon,
How you travel is up to you.



Note to reader: The picture below will change from week to week in **Family Connections 1**. Your child will enjoy talking with you about different kinds of transportation as you look at the pictures together. You can tell each other travel stories, or plan pretend trips. It doesn't cost a penny to use your imagination.

Bringing Family Connections 1 to the home of:



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