

PARENTS COUNT

PRACTICAL TIPS FOR PARENTS



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A LETTER FROM AN ACTIVE KID:

Dear Mom and Dad,

I'm an active kid. I like to move around and try new things. Most young kids are pretty active like me. Parents sometimes worry that there's something wrong with us—like being hyperactive or something—but most of the time we're fine. We are just really active.

You can help me by doing certain things every day. First, give me an early bedtime. Sometimes I get so tired that to keep going I turn my engines on full. This makes it seem like I'm really not tired, but I am. Set a regular early bedtime because kids my age need twelve to thirteen hours of sleep a night. My bedtime might need to be soon after dinner for me to get that much sleep.

Because I am active and my engines are running on full power I need help calming myself down. A regular routine for going to sleep at the same time every day really helps. Pull the curtains shut, turn the lights down low, and put on soft, relaxing music. Get me ready for bed with a warm and calming bath, make sure my teeth are brushed, and then let's cuddle together and read a story. At first I might not like the change, but remember, I need my sleep so I can do my best every day.

Take me outside every day. I won't melt if it's raining and I love the snow and cold. Going for walks and exploring are great fun. Sometimes I just need a place to play—a place where it's okay to use loud voices and to run and climb. I will get dirty. Don't get mad at me, just put me in some old clothes and then you won't mind if I get

dirty. You will have more laundry, but I'll be a lot happier and better behaved so it's worth the work.

I like to explore because I have a lot to learn every day. And give me something new to try every day. If it's an art project, I'm not worried if my work doesn't look like a grown-up's does, I just need a chance to try out my own ideas. So give me some glue, tape, and markers, and lots of cool things that I like to feel, like cotton balls, fuzzy pipe cleaners, and a place to work where I can be messy. You can buy these things at the dollar store so you don't have to spend a lot of money. This will help me use my energy to make new things instead of making trouble.

I love music, so put on some dancing music for me! I like something with a great beat—it gets my toes tapping and my body wiggling. I can dance to a couple of songs while you're getting ready to leave in the morning. You can also find great kids' exercise videos or CDs at the library. I like to try all the things I see: stretching and bending, jumping and swaying. They are another great way for me to get started in the morning.

I don't mean to misbehave. I just need some help using my energy in the right way. Don't tell me I'm not behaving, just teach me how you want it done so I know!

*Thanks for understanding,
Mom and Dad.*

Love, Your Kid

Putting Their Senses To Work

Young children use their senses to learn about the world, so help them learn by putting those senses to work in your daily family life. There isn't much sensory learning going on while children are watching TV, so limit television time and free up more time for fun and simple activities such as these:

- Ask your child to help you carry in the heavy grocery bags.
- Go for a bike or scooter ride.
- Go to the park to swing on the swings.
- Offer warm clothes or a blanket right out of the dryer.
- Play with play dough or clay.
- Ask your child to help wash the dishes.
- Give your child a bath.
- Take a walk.
- Have a pillow fight.
- Play with hula hoops.



- Let your child play outside in wet or snowy weather.
- Play with stickers and tape.
- Finger paint.
- Use a variety of straws, crazy straws, and coffee stirrers for drinks.
- Try snacks that are chewy and crunchy.
- Listen and dance to music.

There are many great sensory experiences waiting for you and your child. Look for sensory activities that you both enjoy and do them together!



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Claudia C. Mincemoyer, Ph.D., Better Kid Care Program Director
341 North Science Park Road – Suite 208, State College, PA 16803
Phone: 1-800-452-9108 • Web site: www.betterkidcare.psu.edu

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