Computers & Kids NEWS

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Money Matters for Children!

How do children learn about money? Before preschoolers even start school, they spend years watching how the adults in their lives spend money. They also tend to watch television and all of the commercials selling them a never-ending array of toys! How can you teach your child to have healthy attitudes about money? When should children start saving? How old are children when they understand the value of money?

Practice waiting! In order to learn about saving money, children need to learn and practice the art of waiting before spending money. Saving charts can help teach the concept of waiting. For more ideas (in both English and Spanish) on creating saving charts, go to the Thrive-by-5 website (www.creditunion.coop/thriveby5/). Also find tips on earning money, having fun without spending money, and preventing losing money!

Money counts! Money is a great tool for teaching preschoolers early math concepts. Coins can be sorted, stacked, counted, traced, and exchanged! Find great downloads, games, and teaching ideas for young children at the Money Instructor (www.moneyinstructor.com/kindergarten.asp).

Valuable tips for all ages! The Choose-to-Save site is valuable because it's your one-stop-shop for teaching children of all ages to save money. From teaching a two-year-old to put money in a piggy bank to teaching a teenager to balance a checking account and using credit cards responsibly, this site is worth book marking! See www.choosetosave.org and search "kids".

Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,

The recent **Consumer Electronics Show** was a showroom of children's technology where a few trends jumped out at me!

1. Computers continue getting smaller and cheaper. I counted five brands of "netbooks" -- Windows-based computers that are light, small, and cost less than $500. SanDisk featured a 60 GB solid-state hard drive that I held in my hand. It was the size and weight of a credit card! These types of drives are both less likely to crash (there are no moving parts) and they are much faster. Because these computers are designed to go online, they are ideal for families who rely heavily on the Internet.
2. Touch screens have arrived. Imagine an iPhone, the size of a computer monitor. I had a chance to play with one model, the HP TouchSmart PC, a 22-inch all-in-one computer (like the current iMacs) with touch screens, that would be great as a family information center. I had a chance to do some finger scribbling, and used a special browser designed to let you flip through web sites, much like you choose songs on an iPod Touch. Your computer mouse is destined for a museum.
3. If you didn't buy that big screen flat panel TV last year, you're in luck. Because of the poor economy, there's a glut of large LCD screens on the market. Over the next few months, you'll see prices plummet (below $500) as retailers try to reduce their inventory. An appliance distributor told me so!

Speaking of money, we've designed a LittleClickers column around some common questions children might have about their dollars and cents. For example, do you know what happens when a dollar bill gets torn in half? Is it still good? You'll find out in this edition.

Based on the Consumer Electronics Show, this will be an exciting year for children's technology! We look forward to keeping you up-to-date.

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