

# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

## CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

February 2003

### SHORT NOTES



#### Focus on fixes

When your child makes a mistake, it can be tempting to respond with criticism. Instead, try to focus on solutions. *Example:* Say, "Let's pin your key to the inside of your book bag," rather than, "I can't believe you forgot your key."

#### Weekly reading

A newspaper's help-wanted advertisements can be a great place for your child to practice reading. Encourage her to find a job description that sounds interesting. Have her think about what the job might be like. Or pretend you're the employer, and give her an "interview."

#### Family holiday

Need an idea for some fun family time? Ask your child to create a new holiday. Then, see how many ways he can think of to celebrate it. For example, on "Ice Cream Sunday," everyone could eat an ice cream dessert before dinner!

#### Worth quoting

"Those who stand for nothing fall for anything." *Alexander Hamilton*

### JUST FOR FUN

**Teacher:** Who succeeded the first president of the United States?

**Student:** The second one.



## Being a friend

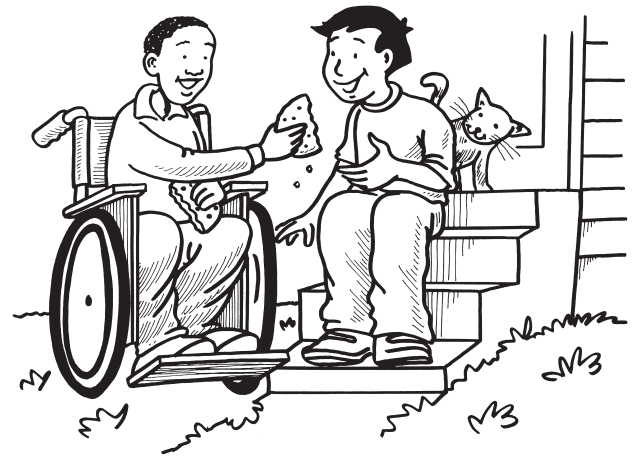
Daniel and Marcus have been friends since kindergarten. They like to talk, laugh, and try new activities together. Their friendship gives them confidence and security.

How can you help your child develop strong friendships? Teach him to be a good friend by talking with him about the qualities below.

**Kindness.** Your child may not realize that kindness often is shown in little ways. For instance, she could send a smile across a crowded room, say "hi" in the hallways, or split a cookie in half to share. If she performs simple acts of kindness, she's likely to also receive them.

#### Encouragement.

Most people need their friends the most when the going gets tough. Can your child think of situations when he could make a friend feel better? *Examples:* offering to help a classmate with a difficult math problem; telling a teammate, "Don't worry. We all make mistakes," after he messes up a play. Practicing now will make him more apt to be a good friend as he gets older.

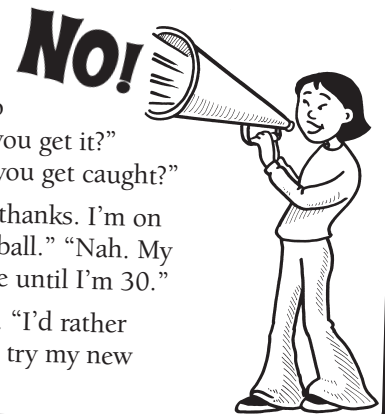


**Patience.** Your youngster may get frustrated when she and her friends disagree. It's important to remind her that no two people get along all the time. Sometimes people even say things they don't mean, such as, "You're not my friend anymore." Encourage your child to be patient. These storms usually blow over quickly. ♥

### Defense against drugs

What's the only drug habit you want your children to develop? The habit of saying no! But saying the word "no" isn't the only solution. Share these additional ways your youngsters can avoid offers of alcohol and other drugs:

- Respond with questions. "What is it?" "What will it do to you?" "Where did you get it?" "What will happen if you get caught?"
- Give excuses. "No, thanks. I'm on my way to play basketball." "Nah. My parents will ground me until I'm 30."
- Suggest alternatives. "I'd rather watch a movie." "Let's try my new computer game." ♥

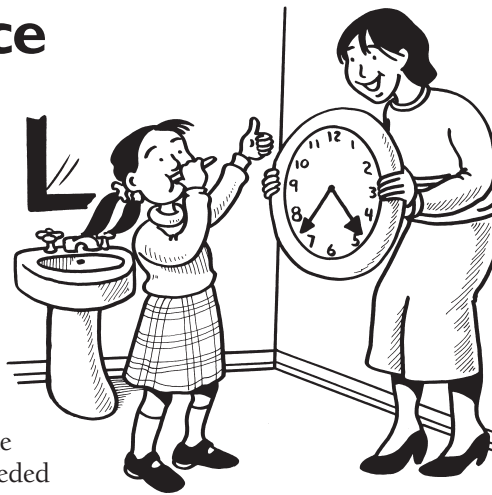


## Q & A Picking up the pace

**Q:** My daughter always dawdles. It seems as if she's late for everything. What can I do to help her pick up the pace?

**A:** Begin by helping her gain a sense of how long it takes her to get things done. For instance, use a kitchen timer or a watch to time her in the morning. Determine how much time she uses to get dressed, brush her teeth, comb her hair, and so on.

Remember that your child might not be able to do things as quickly as you think she should. It's possible that she hasn't yet completely developed the skills needed to perform certain tasks. If her tasks take her longer than you



expect them to, try waking her up earlier or allowing more time before leaving the house.

Your daughter may also have trouble switching gears from one activity to another. Whenever you can, give her a five-minute warning. The notice might help her move between activities more easily and quickly. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Message in a bottle

Your children can flex their creative-writing muscles with this hands-on activity. It's also a great party game.

**Materials:** paper, pencils, plastic bottles with caps, a bathtub or large bucket filled with water



First, have everyone close their eyes and pretend they're stranded on a desert island. Their only hope of rescue is to put a message in a bottle.

Next, have them brainstorm what their messages should say. Ask questions to get their ideas rolling. *Examples:* Who are they? How did they get to the island? Where were they going? What is the island like? Where are they sleeping? How are they finding food?

Finally, put the written messages inside the bottles. Place the bottles in the water, and let everyone take turns fishing them out and reading the messages aloud. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### A chore partnership

I used to spend the first hour of my weekly cleaning day picking up after my son Robert. I had to put his clothes, books, and games away before I could get started. And getting him to help was like pulling teeth.

When I complained about this to my neighbor, she gave me some great advice. When she gets home from work on Friday, she tosses her kids' stray belongings into laundry baskets. Then, she puts their baskets on their beds. Her rule is that they have to put the items away before they can enjoy any weekend plans.

At the end of the week, I placed an overflowing basket on Robert's bed and explained our new house rule. The laundry basket was empty by the time his favorite cartoon came on the next morning! ♥



## Note-taking tips

Taking notes in class can help kids listen and learn. It's a skill they will need in elementary school and beyond. Here are some suggestions you can pass along to your youngster.

**Nice and neat.** Try to write neatly. You want to be able to read and understand your notes later.

**Short and sweet.** It's not necessary to write down everything the teacher says. She

may provide clues to what's most important by repeating certain items or writing them on the board. To save time, you can use abbreviations or symbols.

*Examples:* "b/n" for between, "#" for number.

**Thorough and complete.** Going back over your notes at study time can boost comprehension. Fill in any missing details, and make sure everything is clear. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ideas that promote school success, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,  
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.  
3035 Valley Avenue, Suite 103, Winchester, VA 22601  
(540) 723-0322 • rfeustomer@aspenpubl.com  
ISSN 1540-5621