

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

March 2003

SHORT NOTES



Bedtime kit

Is getting your child to bed on time a struggle? Make a bedtime kit by placing a flashlight, book, and small radio inside a shoebox. Once she's in bed, tell her she's allowed to use the items for 15 minutes before lights out.

Staying organized

Help your youngster clean out her backpack daily. First, take out all the papers. Together, decide which ones she needs to keep. Then, file them in folders by subject, and recycle or throw away the rest. Better organization leads to better focus.

Memory tip

Children often have trouble remembering assignments, tests, and chores. Why not have your youngster make a list on a notepad or index card and slip it in his pocket. He won't have to worry as much about missing events and deadlines.

Worth quoting

"Correction does much, but encouragement does more." *Goethe*

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: How are you doing in arithmetic?

Student: I've learned how to add up the zeros, but the numbers are still giving me trouble.



Making "sense" of writing

Good writers use their senses to make stories come alive. They listen, look, and touch to gather interesting details. Try these activities to sharpen your youngster's senses and improve his writing skills.

Sound safari

Take your child on a hunt for sounds. You can go anywhere—from a busy city sidewalk to a calm country field. Have your youngster close her eyes, listen for two minutes, and then make a list of the sounds she has heard. *Examples:* police siren, motorcycle, footsteps, rustling leaves. Challenge her to write a story using all the sounds.

Character collage

Suggest that your child cut out pictures of people from old magazines. He can make a collage by gluing them on construction paper or cardboard. Then, each of you choose several of the characters and write a paragraph introducing them. *Examples:* What are their names? Where do they live? What are



their favorite activities? Trade papers and compare.

Touching tales

Make a "feeling" bag for your youngster. Gather objects with different textures, such as a pine cone, cotton ball, and piece of steel wool. Put them in a large grocery bag. Have your child reach in and touch an object without looking at it. How many ways can she describe what it feels like? *Examples:* "This is prickly like a cactus." "It feels like a scared porcupine." ♥

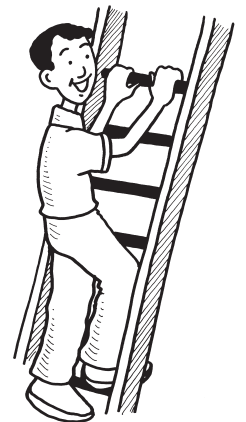


Steps to success

Q: My son wants to bring up his science grade. What can I do to get him motivated?

A: Help your son make a goal ladder. It's a visual reminder of what he could do to improve. First, brainstorm the steps he can take to reach the goal. *Examples:* Pay attention in science class. Look over notes daily. Finish all assignments. Study for tests with a friend.

Then, have your child draw a large ladder and write the steps to his goal on the rungs. Write the goal in big letters at the top and hang the poster where he will see it every day. ♥



Being a good sport

“It’s not whether you win or lose. It’s how you play the game.”

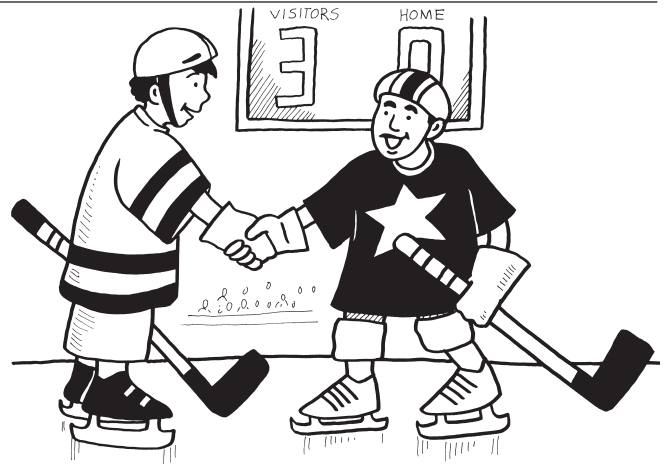
Does your child understand the meaning behind this well-known saying? Being a good sport is important in games and in life. Here are three ways you can teach sportsmanship to your youngster.

Keeping cool. When your child loses a game or makes a mistake, try not to overreact. Let her know that trying her best is more important than winning or losing. But don’t give her pointers right away. Wait a day or two before offering tips for improvement.

Avoiding criticism.

If you compare your youngster to his teammates, he may feel jealous or incapable. Instead of making a comparison, try sticking to compliments. *Example:* “That player kicked a super field goal!” instead of, “Why can’t you kick a field goal like he did?”

Playing with grace. Whether you win or lose a game, your youngster will watch your reaction. Avoid bragging or



putting yourself down. And remember to congratulate the winner. Modeling sportsmanship is one of the best ways to teach it. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Magical math

Your youngster can wow family and friends with a little math magic. Share this activity to practice addition.

Materials: pencil, paper

First, ask your child to draw a large square. Then, divide the square into nine smaller squares by drawing two vertical lines and two horizontal lines. Have him write the number 5 in the middle square.

On the bottom of the paper, write the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, and 9. Tell your child to write the numbers in the empty squares so that each row, column, and diagonal adds up to 15.

There are several different ways to arrange the numbers. Here’s one example:

8	3	4
1	5	9
6	7	2

See how many combinations your youngster can find. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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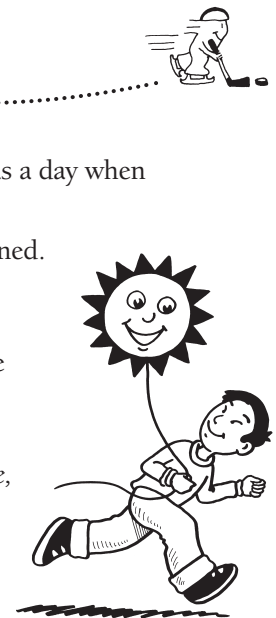
Improving a bad day

All kids have bad days from time to time. If your child has a day when everything seems to go wrong, try these suggestions:

- Encourage your child to talk to you about what happened. Sharing his woes with a sympathetic listener may make him feel better.

- If your youngster is frustrated, exercise may help. Have her run in place or do jumping jacks for a few minutes. Physical activity is a healthy way to let off steam.

- Read books, such as *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day* by Judith Viorst. Poor Alexander had dozens of bad things happen to him—from getting gum in his hair to stepping in mud. Laughing about a character’s troubles may help your child forget his. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT A picky eater

My daughter used to be the world’s pickiest eater. No matter what I fixed, Catherine would stick up her nose at it. Frustrated, I went to the library and found several tips about children’s nutrition.

I learned that even though Catherine ate healthy snacks, they were taking away her appetite. So, I limit snacking to no more than two hours before

meals. I also asked her to help me plan our meals. The first thing she suggested was a Chinese food night. We ate with chopsticks—it was a great way to get her to eat lots of vegetables!

Finally, I started giving her a spoonful of each food I fixed. She has to try at least one bite before I give her seconds of the foods she prefers. Catherine still doesn’t like some foods, but she’s eating more at mealtime. ♥

