

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

May 2003

#### SHORT NOTES



##### Rule reminder

Do your children sometimes “forget” your family rules? You may want to put the most important ones in writing. *Example:* “Chores first, then play.” Hang them in a central place as an easy-to-see reminder.

##### It’s never too late

If you have questions about how your child did in school this year, contact the teacher. Ask about his progress and what skills he needs to improve. She may have worksheets or handouts you can use with him over the summer, or suggestions for other ways you can help.

##### Bit-by-bit reading

Here’s a quick way to encourage reading. Clip articles from a magazine and glue them to pieces of lightweight cardboard. Cut them into strips and see if your youngster can put them back together in order. Have her read the articles aloud.

##### Worth quoting

“My mother had a great deal of trouble with me, but I think she enjoyed it.”  
*Mark Twain*

#### JUST FOR FUN



“I can’t come out to play. I’m helping my dad with my homework.”

## Learning on the go

Standing in line. Driving in the car. Sitting in a waiting room. Looking for a way to pass the time?

Try these learning games. All you need is your child and your thinking caps.

##### What am I?

Ask your child to describe something without telling you what it is. You have to guess from her clues. *Examples:* “I live on a big island. I hop. I have a pocket.” (*Answer:* kangaroo.) “I’m made of wax. I love to draw. I come in many colors.” (*Answer:* crayon.) Making up riddles requires critical thinking.

##### The last letter

The object of this game is to spell the longest word possible—without being the person who says the last letter. Players take turns saying letters to spell a word. *Example:* After four turns, the letters are s-t-a-r. Players could then add “l,” “i,” “g,” and “h.” The person whose turn comes next has to supply the last letter (“t”) and loses the round. It’s a great way to stretch spelling muscles.

##### May I introduce...

Challenge your youngster to make up a story based on unusual introductions. For example, what would happen if Little Red Riding Hood met Little Miss Muffet? (They



might compare wolves and spiders.) If Winnie-the-Pooh met Corduroy? (Pooh might offer Corduroy some honey.) Imaginary conversations build creative-writing skills. ♥

#### Helmet safety

What do bikes, skateboards, and rollerblades have in common? They’re fun, they have wheels, and they should always be enjoyed while wearing a helmet.

Use this checklist to keep your child safe:

- ▲ Does the helmet fit snugly? When your youngster shakes his head, the helmet shouldn’t move.
- ▲ Does it sit flat on her head? If it’s tilted back at an angle, it needs to be adjusted.
- ▲ Is your child’s vision unobstructed? If not, he may need a smaller helmet.
- ▲ Is the chin strap firmly buckled? If it doesn’t snap together tightly, it should be replaced.
- ▲ Is the helmet free of cracks? Even very small cracks can reduce its effectiveness. ♥





## Staying in touch with a friend

**Q:** My son's best friend is moving to another town this summer. They're both really upset. How can I help my child feel better?

**A:** Let your son know you understand how he's feeling. You might want to share a memory of losing one of your friends or a time when you were lonely. Remind him that he can always talk to you when he's feeling down.

Your youngster may want to do something special with his friend before moving day. Consider helping him throw a going-away party or arrange a special outing.



He could also work on a memory book for his friend. Suggest he include pictures of their school, neighborhood, friends, and pets, and ask classmates to write "good luck" messages.

Finally, talk about ways to stay in touch. Perhaps they could e-mail each other on a certain night each week. Depending on the distance, it might be possible to plan a visit for later in the summer. ♥



### ACTIVITY CORNER

### Traces of history

Your youngster can explore history with this hands-on activity.

**Materials:** tape; coins; lightweight paper; crayons, pencils, or artist's charcoal

Tear off a piece of tape and make a circle with it—sticky side

out. Use the circle to tape a coin to a flat surface, such as a countertop. Have your child place a piece of paper over the coin and rub gently back and forth using a crayon, pencil, or artist's charcoal. What appears on the paper? Suggest she do rubbings of the opposite side of the coin, as well as coins of different sizes.

Your child can also make rubbings of outdoor items. *Examples:* cornerstones and plaques on buildings, carvings and lettering on monuments, decorative patterns on fences. ♥



### PARENT TO PARENT

### Better family discussions

After reading about the benefits of family meetings, my wife and I decided to give it a try. We spend the first 20 minutes of each meeting talking about important issues. One week, we'll talk about telephone use. Another week, it's the kids' allowances.

In the beginning, whenever we disagreed, everyone would raise their voices and interrupt. So, we came up with an idea. My wife used nail polish to paint a smile face on a large wooden spoon. We place the spoon in the middle of the table. Anyone who wants to speak must pick up the spoon. No one else is allowed to talk until that person puts it back on the table. Then, someone else gets a turn. The spoon seemed a little silly at first, but it really helps us listen to each other. ♥



### Tackling word problems

Math word problems often send shivers up children's spines. Share these steps to help your child take them in stride:

**1** Read the problem silently. Then, look for directions that tell you which operation you'll use to solve the problem. *Examples:* "Altogether" and "total" signal addition or multiplication.

"How much is left" and "how many more" signal subtraction.

**2** Pick out all the numbers. Remember, some may be written as words ("dozen," "twice as many").

**3** Read the problem aloud and try to visualize it in your head. Or draw a picture or diagram of the problem on paper. You can also use pennies or buttons to represent the numbers.

**4** Write the equation and solve the problem. *Example:* "If there are one dozen cookies for four children to share, how many cookies can each child have?" (Answer:  $12 \div 4 = 3$ ). ♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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