

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

November 2003

SHORT NOTES



Tip for anxiety

Children often get nervous when they have to talk in front of the class. The next time your youngster has an oral report, suggest that he pick out one person to focus on. Looking at a friendly face will build his confidence.

Common ground

If your child complains that a teacher is too hard or strict, encourage her to find something they have in common. Knowing they share a similar interest will help your youngster see her teacher as a person. *Example:* "Did you know Mrs. Smith loves to paint like you do?"

No more nagging

Tired of nagging your child to put his belongings away? Try this idea. Instead of saying, "Put your shoes away," ask, "What might happen if you leave your shoes in front of the door? Can you think of a better place to put them?"

Worth quoting

"A torn jacket is soon mended, but hard words bruise the heart of a child."
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

JUST FOR FUN



Q: How many feet are there in the world?

A: Twice as many as there are people!

Solving the mystery of math

Whether your child is mastering multiplication or fumbling with fractions, regular practice is valuable. These ideas can help your youngster feel at ease with math—and they take only a few minutes a day.

Simple sets

Whenever possible, group related facts together. *Examples:* If your youngster is doing multiplication and division, she could try $8 \times 3 = 24$, $3 \times 8 = 24$, $24 \div 8 = 3$, and $24 \div 3 = 8$. If she's working on fractions, she might try $\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} = \frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{2} = \frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{2} = \frac{1}{4}$, and $\frac{3}{4} - \frac{1}{4} = \frac{1}{2}$. Using the same set of numbers makes learning math facts easier and helps her see patterns. *Hint:* Stick to three or four problems at a time.

Different drills

Present information in various forms. For instance, say a problem out loud ("7 x 3"). Ask your youngster to write the problem vertically on a piece of paper, then horizontally. Show him how to use pennies or buttons to work out



the answer. (He could make three rows of seven each and count them.) Seeing the problem in different ways improves understanding.

Daily practice

Try quizzing your youngster while preparing dinner or doing dishes. Start with five minutes a day and work up to ten. If you need ideas, glance at her math homework to see what she's covering, or ask her teacher. Regular practice will sharpen her skills in no time. ♥

More math practice

The Web offers a wealth of math material. Here are three sites your youngster can visit for hands-on practice.

AAA Math

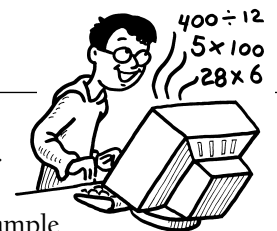
Explains math concepts by grade level and provides sample problems and games for each topic. Tackles everything from adding and subtracting to decimals, place values, and geometry. www.aaamath.com

All Math

In addition to games and flashcards, this site has biographies of famous mathematicians to spark children's interest. www.allmath.com

Cool Math

Click on "Kids," and you'll discover dozens of games, puzzles, and brain-teasers. Colorful characters guide kids through the activities. www.coolmath.com ♥



Q & A Avoiding favoritism

Q: Sometimes my kids accuse me of playing favorites. How can I make them both feel special?

A: Try spending private time alone with each child. Reading aloud, playing a game, or talking before bed can help your kids feel important. Once in a while, you might consider doing something out of the ordinary with each one, such as going to dinner or a movie.

Avoid comparing your children. It can make them feel competitive and may suggest you prefer one over the other. Instead, focus on their unique qualities and interests. If one child loves basketball, encourage her to practice, and point out her progress. If the other enjoys art, display his pictures, and provide him with supplies.

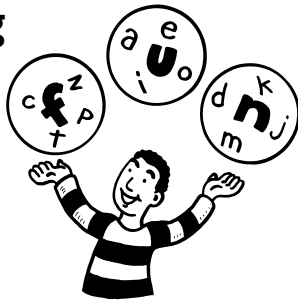


Whenever you can, assign similar chores to your children. Also, look for ways to provide them with equal opportunities. If you allow one to play a sport, for example, try to make sure the other one is given the chance to join a team, too. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Spelling circles

If you have paper and a pencil, you and your youngster can play this simple spelling game. It's a great way to pass the time in waiting rooms or in the car.



Draw three circles on a piece of paper. Write five consonants in the first circle. Write five vowels (a, e, i, o, u) in the second. Choose five more consonants for the third circle.

Challenge your child to combine letters from all three circles (in order) to make as many words as possible. You can play at the same time and see whose list is longer after two minutes.

For older children, add more letters to the first and third circles, and play for five minutes. ♥

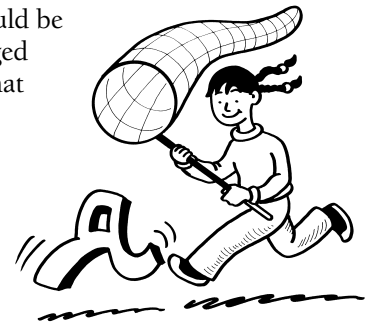
PARENT TO PARENT

Report card responsibility

Last year my daughter was upset when she got her report card. Beth expected an A in science but got a B-. She had no idea why the grade was lower than she thought it would be.

At first, I was going to call her teacher and ask about the grade. But after talking to my wife, I realized it would be good for our daughter to take charge. We encouraged Beth to ask her teacher and helped her practice what she would say.

The next evening, Beth didn't want to tell us what her teacher said. Finally, she admitted that she had several zeros in the grade book from incomplete assignments. The teacher offered to help her remember due dates by checking her assignment book at the end of every class. Now, Beth's trying hard to be responsible for her work. ♥



Coping with change

Families go through lots of changes. If yours faces a divorce, job loss, or other tough times, your children may feel confused and hurt. Here are several tips to help them cope:

▲ **Keep your kids informed.** Let them know what is happening and why. Shielding them from the truth often makes the situation worse. Instead, answer their questions honestly, and provide reassurance. And be prepared to revisit the

topic several times. It often takes awhile for the information to sink in.

▲ **Ask for your youngsters' input.** This is especially important if you have to change daily or weekly routines.

Giving your children a say can help them feel more secure and in control.

▲ **Let the school know.** If your children's teachers are aware of the situation, they can be supportive and watch for any changes in your kids' attitudes or performance. ♥



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