

# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

## CONNECTION®

September 2003

### SHORT NOTES



#### Schoolwork is #1

Want to show your youngster that schoolwork is important? Try picking a special spot to display his work. It could be on the fridge or a family bulletin board. Ask him to select a new item to display each week.

#### Check it out!

September is Library Card Sign-Up Month. If your child doesn't have her own card, now is a great time to get one. Checking out books can help motivate her to read for fun—and teach her about responsibility.

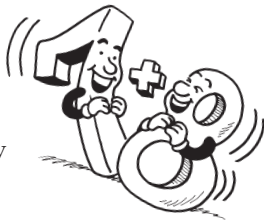
#### Backpack tip

Encourage your child to bend his knees when he picks up his backpack. If he bends at the waist, he risks straining his back or pulling a muscle. *Hint:* Pack heavy items in the bag first, so they rest on his lower back.

#### Worth quoting

"Children are our most valuable natural resource." *Herbert Hoover*

### JUST FOR FUN



**Teacher:** How old are you?

**Student:** Fifteen.

**Teacher:** But you were seven last year, and now you're eight.

**Student:** That's right. Seven plus eight makes fifteen.

## Slay the dragon of disorder

Stepping over stacks of books? Looking for lost assignments? Try these simple activities to help your youngster get—and stay—organized this school year. All you need are a few household items and some creativity to keep track of...

#### Papers

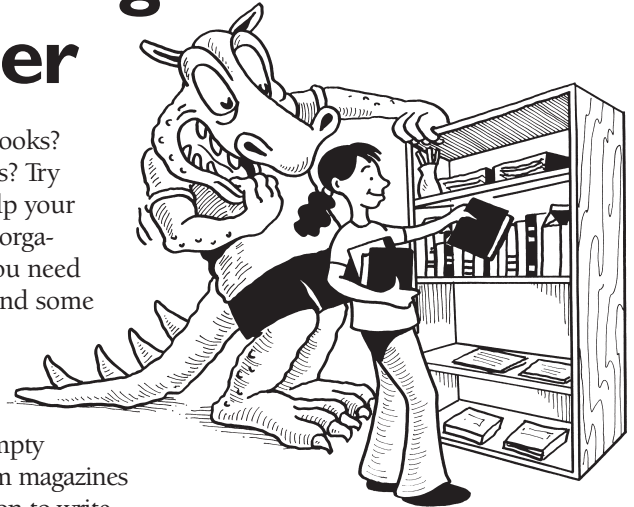
Let each member of your family personalize an empty cereal box using pictures from magazines or old photos. Ask each person to write his name in big letters on the side. Then, place the boxes in a convenient spot and use them to deliver school papers, regular mail, and personal notes. *Example:* Your child puts a permission slip in your box. You sign it and place it in hers.

#### Books

Wash two milk or orange juice paper cartons and fill them with sand or pebbles. Your youngster can cover them with construction or wrapping paper. Use the cartons as bookends to neatly store textbooks or library books.

#### Pens and pencils

Potato chip containers with plastic lids make great supply holders. *Tip:* Here's a fun way for your child to decorate them. Put some shaving cream on a paper plate and swirl in a few drops of food coloring with a straw. Have your child



press a piece of white paper down into the mixture. Carefully lift up the paper and wipe off the extra shaving cream with a paper towel. When the paper dries, glue it to the outside of the can. ♥

### In touch with teachers

You can show your child's teachers that you want to support their efforts. How? By keeping in touch with notes or e-mail. Here are a few qualities of successful messages.



**Brief.** Teachers communicate with a roomful of students and their parents. Try to keep your information short and to the point.

**Clear.** Cursive handwriting is often difficult to read. Consider printing or typing notes. For clarity, you may want to stick to one or two points.

**Timely.** If your youngster is struggling with a particular subject or has a problem, let the teacher know right away. ♥

# Getting in the homework habit

After the lazy days of summer, it's tough to get back in the swing of doing nightly homework. Share the tips below with your child.

**A regular time.** Some youngsters prefer to get homework out of the way right after school. Others would rather wait until later in the evening. Find out what works best for your child. Then, make it part of her routine by sticking to that time.

**A familiar place.** Is your child's favorite homework spot at



a desk or the kitchen table? If he chooses the place, he may be more likely to work without a fuss. Plus, going to the same spot every day will help him concentrate.

**A simple reminder.** A special object may help your youngster get in the mood for homework. She could put on a "homework hat" or hang a sign ("Quiet—Great Mind at Work") whenever she sits down to work. That way, other family members will know she's busy. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER



### As the story unfolds

What takes almost no time every day, teaches your child about patience, and builds creative-writing skills? This simple activity!



**Materials:** notebook, pen

Have your child label the outside of a notebook "My Daily Story." She can write the date on the first page. Encourage her to write one sentence of the story every day. (Older children might enjoy writing a short paragraph a day.)

Your youngster may want to write in the notebook just before bed or at the breakfast table. If she likes to draw, suggest that she add pictures. When the story is finished, let her read it aloud to the whole family.

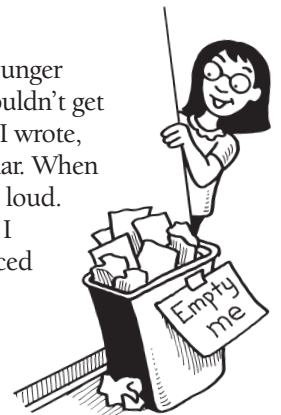
**Variations:** Challenge your youngster to use as many of her weekly spelling words as possible. Have each family member write one sentence a day. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Household humor

One day my daughter, Deanna, and her younger brother, Sam, would not stop arguing. No matter what I did, I couldn't get them to quit for more than a few minutes. Finally, I got creative. I wrote, "Stop arguing," on a piece of paper and taped it to our dog's collar. When my kids saw the sign in such an unlikely place, they laughed out loud.

Recently, Deanna had been forgetting to take out the trash. I was tired of nagging her, so I got a pad of sticky notes and placed a note on every trash can in the house. "Dear trash can, why aren't you empty?" "Poor trash can. I'm sorry you're so full." Magically, the cans were all empty that evening. A little humor has really helped me get the kids to cooperate! ♥



## Q & A Safe at home

**Q:** Now that my son is older, how can I prepare him to start staying home alone for short periods?

**A:** Being alone can be scary for children. Show your youngster how to lock the doors and windows, and role-play what to do in emergencies. Situations to consider

are a stranger at the door, popcorn catching on fire in the microwave, and cutting his hand.

Let your son know he should never tell callers you're not home. Instead, he might say you can't come to the phone and then take a message.

Together, make a list of emergency telephone numbers where you or another trusted adult can be reached. Have your child memorize the names of people to call in different situations.

Try holding a few five-minute practice sessions from time to time. Practicing is a good way to help your youngster build his comfort and confidence levels. ♥



## 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