

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

October 2004



SHORT NOTES

Writing booster

Try this idea for fun writing practice. Set aside an evening each week for the family to write letters or send greeting cards. Keep plenty of paper, pens, envelopes, and stamps handy. You can write to friends, relatives, pen pals, or even famous people.

Dollars and sense

Does your child insist on having expensive brand-name clothes and shoes? Tell him what you're willing to spend for an item. If he wants something that costs more, let him earn the money to pay the difference. How? Consider paying him to help you organize a messy closet or clean the garage.

Eating on the go

If you're like most busy families, you've probably eaten a meal in the car at least once. Fast-food meals tend to be expensive and high in calories. For healthier (and cheaper) options, check out www.cancer.org/docroot/PED/content/PED_3_2x_Snacks_and_Dashboard_Dining.asp?sitearea=PED.

Worth quoting

"See everything; overlook a great deal; correct a little." *Pope John XXIII*

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: If you had \$10 in one pocket and \$12 in your other pocket, what would you have?

Student: Someone else's pants on!



"How was school today?"

Parent: "What did you do in school today?" *Child:* "Nothing."
Parent: "Well, did you learn anything?" *Child:* "Um, I guess so. I dunno."

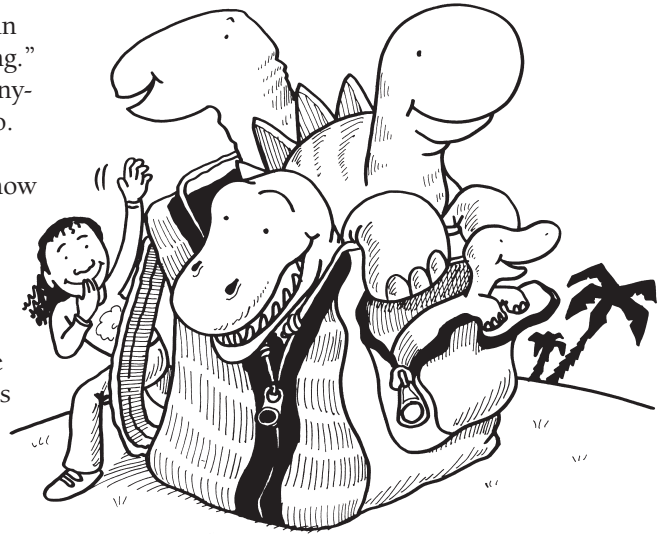
Sound familiar? Knowing how to talk with your youngster about her day will help you stay involved in the learning process. Try these ideas.

Do some sleuthing. Make a point to drop by your child's classroom and take a peek at the bulletin board and other displays. Then, try asking her specific questions, like "I see you're studying dinosaurs. What do you know about the stegosaurus?" And remember to check the school calendar from time to time so you can find out about upcoming field trips, spirit days, or assemblies.

Make a date. When your youngster gets home from school, greet him with a hug, and tell him you want to hear all about his day. Then, choose a special time and place for the two of you to get together. For example, you might say,

"Meet me in the family room at 7:30." Have his favorite snack waiting for him, and you might be surprised by how much he will tell you!

Tips: Mention something about *your* day first. Then, it will be easier for your child to talk about himself. And remember, it's important not to act like you're prying or checking up on him, but to let him know you're interested because you care. ♥



Listening—A whole body workout

Picture this: You're trying to tell a friend something important. But her back is turned, and she's writing out a grocery list while you talk. Does it feel like she's really listening?

Unfortunately, this is the way some parents "listen" to their children. The next time your child is talking, try tuning in with these techniques to let him know you're truly listening:

1. Stop whatever you're doing.
2. Turn toward him.
3. Look him in the eye (consider kneeling or squatting to get on his level).
4. Respond to what he's saying. ♥



Three cheers for homework!

Homework is an important part of learning for children of all ages. Here are a few ways you can cheer your youngster on to handle it successfully.

Stick around. Being available helps your child in two ways. First, she'll see that you take homework seriously. Second, she can come to you if she needs help with directions or explanations.

Turn off the TV. Television is a distraction. Even kids who are really focused take longer to complete their homework, and remember less of what they study, when they work in front of the TV.



Offer praise. Let your youngster know you notice when he starts his homework on time, works efficiently, or sticks with a difficult assignment all the way to the end. He will feel more motivated.

Be aware. Keeping an eye on homework will give you a feel for how well your child

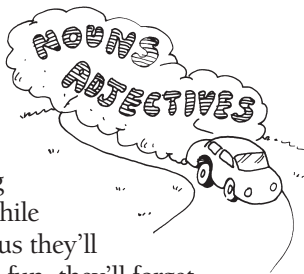
understands what she's studying. Look for comments from her teacher. They may include tips on how your youngster can improve, or compliments that you'll be proud to share with her. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Auto entertainment

Your kids will get lots of writing, reading, and grammar practice doing this activity while traveling—plus they'll have so much fun, they'll forget to bicker! You'll need paper, a pencil, and several books or magazines.



Have one child be the "writer" and copy a paragraph out of a book or magazine. Ask him to erase one or two nouns or adjectives from each sentence, and write "noun" or "adjective" under each blank spot.

Then, the writer asks the other players to suggest nouns or adjectives to fill in the blanks. Tell the players to use any words that come to mind—even ones that sound silly. When all the blanks are filled in, have someone read the mixed-up paragraph aloud. ♥

Q & A

Coaching kindness

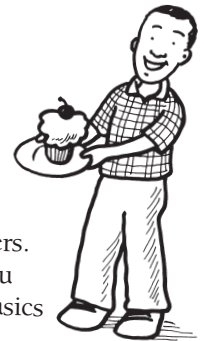
Q: My youngest son doesn't seem to care much about his sister's—or others'—feelings. What can I do?

A: Young children are naturally a bit self-centered. But they also have a caring side. With a little coaching, you can bring it out.

Prompt your youngster gently about how to respond to others. "Karyn sure was nice to share her brownies. Let's say thank you and offer her some of your dessert." Your child will learn the basics of thoughtful behavior.

Be a good model. Let your son see you doing nice things for others. Talk about how happy you are when you make other people happy. You'll teach your youngster that caring for others feels good.

Finally, let your child overhear you telling a friend when your youngster does something for someone. He will want to do more thoughtful things! ♥

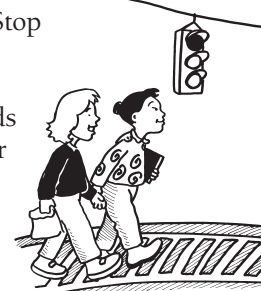


PARENT TO PARENT

Steps to street smarts

When my kids were old enough to start walking to school, I was worried about their safety. A friend of mine said she taught her children these simple rules.

Number one is "Stop and look both ways before crossing a street." I told my kids that just listening for cars isn't enough, because wind or other noises can cover the sound of approaching vehicles.



The second rule is "Use sidewalks and crosswalks whenever possible." I reminded my children that drivers are more likely to be looking out for them in these places.

Then, I added a third rule: "If there are no sidewalks, walk single file, facing traffic." I explained that this helps them stay on the shoulder instead of the roadway. And facing traffic allows them to see oncoming cars.

I make a point to practice these rules with my youngsters whenever we're out. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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