

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

September 2004

#### SHORT NOTES



#### Progress checkup

Consider checking in with your youngster's teachers on a regular basis this year. Ask them how he's doing, and find out if there's anything you can help him work on. You'll stay on top of your child's progress—and know right away if he has any problems.

#### Playing with numbers

Want to help your child succeed with math? Try introducing her to games that involve counting, patterns, and strategy. Hopscotch, Hüsker Dū?, Parcheesi, and Monopoly are just a few that will give your youngster practice with basic math skills.

#### Tube of knowledge

Instead of zoning out with your child in front of TV sitcoms, watch educational programs together. Choose an interesting show, like *National Geographic Explorer*, and talk about it afterward. Your child will enjoy spending time with you, and you both might learn something new.

#### Worth quoting

"Things do not happen. Things are made to happen." *John F. Kennedy*

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Teacher:** Didn't I tell you to stand at the end of the line?

**Pupil:** I tried, but somebody else was already there!



## The three Rs of school success

The new school year is here! You can help make it a successful one by setting the stage for learning. Share these three Rs with your youngster: readiness, routines, and responsibility.

#### Readiness

Ensure that your child goes to school ready to learn every day:

- Speak positively to your child about school and the teachers. Your attitude toward learning will send a powerful message to your youngster.
- See to it that your youngster gets at least eight hours of sleep so he'll feel rested and alert.

#### Routines

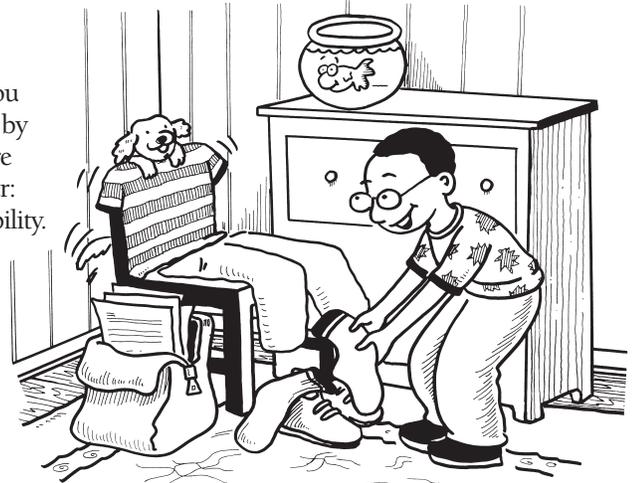
Develop simple routines for smooth, stress-free mornings:

- Help your child pick an outfit and pack her lunch in the evening. Have her put everything she needs for school in a special "grab 'n' go" corner.
- Together, create a regular morning routine. For example, you might make your bed while your youngster gets dressed. Then, you could both eat breakfast.

#### Responsibility

Teach your youngster responsibility by helping him get organized:

- Make sure your child has a notebook for writing down assignments and due dates. You can show a younger child how to mark dates on a calendar so you can both keep track of assignments.
- Give your youngster a large envelope to keep in his book bag. Suggest that he tuck permission slips and



notices of special events into the envelope so they don't get lost. ♥

#### For the love of reading

What's the best way to create a lifelong reader? It's free, it's fun, and it will bring you and your child closer. *Answer:* Reading together. All you need to do is find a time each day when you and your youngster can get cozy and enjoy a good book. Here are three tips to help you choose stories:

**1.** Ask librarians, friends, and teachers for recommendations. *Tip:* If your child doesn't already have a library card, sign her up!

**2.** Find books that expand your child's interests (animals, outer space), deal with an event (a new baby, a visit to the dentist), and build character (friendship, truthfulness).

**3.** Pick stories for both information and enjoyment. Try real and make-believe stories, poems, and children's magazines. ♥



# Making rules that work

One tough part of parenting is making rules that work—and sticking to them. Here are some tips for setting rules that your child will follow.

**Identify your values.** Ask yourself what values you most want your youngster to have. Independence? Respect for authority? A strong work ethic? Let your values guide your rule making.

**Talk it over.** When you and your child are calm, talk about the rules you're thinking of setting. Then, ask for her input. Does she think the rules are fair? Does she understand why



you're making them? If your youngster has some say in the rules, she'll be more willing to follow them.

**Keep it simple.** Make the rules as short and simple as possible ("You must put your bike away each day"). Try to make the consequences

just as clear, like "If you don't put your bike away, you won't be allowed to ride the next day."

**Be consistent.** Once household rules are in place, be consistent in enforcing them. Your child will be less apt to argue with you if he knows your rules are firm. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Vacuum power

Do you know what a vacuum is? It's an empty space—so empty that it doesn't even contain air.



Whenever a vacuum is created, natural forces rush in to fill it up. This phenomenon creates a force that we can use to move things from one place to another.

You and your child can test this process by making a simple vacuum-powered tool called a siphon to move water from one place to another. You'll need a drinking straw and a cup.

Fill the cup with water and stand beside a sink. Put the straw in the cup and suck on it until it fills with water. Continue sucking and, while holding the cup over the sink, take the straw out of the cup. Then, take the straw out of your mouth. What happens? ♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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## PARENT TO PARENT

### Time to unwind

When I get home from work, I want to read the mail and unwind before starting dinner or doing chores. I used to insist that my kids start their homework the minute they got home from school. I believed they should get into the habit of doing homework promptly.

Then, one evening after my son came home from soccer practice, I realized he felt the way I did after work. He was tired and wanted a little downtime. So, instead of nagging him about homework, I looked at the mail while he browsed the comics. In a few minutes, he got up, stretched, and pulled out his homework. I got started on dinner.

Now I give my kids a little "unwinding" time between school and homework. We all appreciate the break. ♥

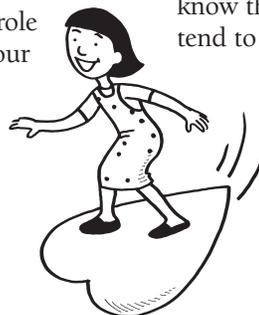


## Q & A Building confidence

**Q:** My kids seem unsure of themselves in new situations. How can I boost their confidence?

**A:** Personality plays a big role in the way children react. Your kids may naturally be more cautious than others. You can help them feel more comfortable. Here's how.

**Let them ease into new situations.** Think of them as the kind of children who prefer to wade gradually into



a cold pool instead of jumping in all at once.

**Point out their strengths.** When kids know they're good at something, they tend to feel more confident.

**Teach them manners.** Youngsters are more at ease around other people when they know the right things to do and say.

**Make sure they know you love them, no matter what.** Your love will help your children feel secure. ♥