

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

February 2005

SHORT NOTES



Tasty math

For some hands-on geometry practice, invite your child into the kitchen. Together, cut sandwiches into triangles, try to slice a pan of brownies into equal squares, or discuss how to divide a pizza among an odd number of people.

Exercise as a team

Next time you go on a walk or jog, ask your youngster to join you. He can walk, run, bike, or rollerblade alongside. You'll both get exercise—and enjoy the time together. *Idea:* Participate in a charity “walkathon” as a family.

Picking your battles

Exhausted from bickering with your kids? Try reviewing the things you argue about. Consider letting go of some issues, like how many times they haven't put their clean laundry away in the past week. Instead, save your energy for battles that involve matters like safety or character.

Worth quoting

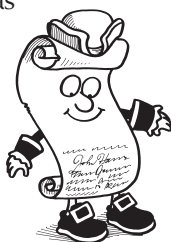
“Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail.”

Ralph Waldo Emerson

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

Student: At the bottom!



Rockin' reading tips

Improving comprehension

Is your youngster struggling to understand what she reads? Many students have trouble with textbook reading assignments.

Try introducing this three-step strategy to your child. Her reading comprehension skills will get a boost.

Look for clues.

Show your child how to scan for clues before she starts reading. Tell her to look at the chapter titles and headings, as well as the illustrations. Then, have her browse through the pages. Ask her if she can figure out what the text will be about. Getting the main idea *before* she starts reading will help her focus on the subject.

2 Highlight key points. As your youngster reads, have him keep a notebook handy so he can jot down ideas. He may want to use colored pens or highlighters to mark key words and phrases in his notes so they jump out at him while he's studying. Encourage him to refer to the highlighted notes as he looks back over the text. They'll help jog his memory about the main points.

3 Engage your brain. Have your child quiz herself after reading a piece of text. Suggest she ask herself

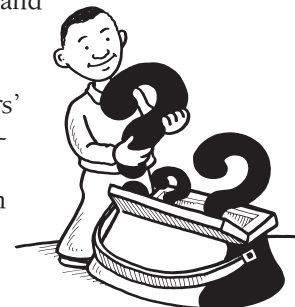


questions, such as “What was the main idea in what I just read?” If she doesn't know the answer, she should reread the section until she finds it. ♥

Ready for parent-teacher talks

Don't be nervous about attending parent-teacher conferences. They're a great way to learn about your child's progress. To get the most out of these meetings:

- Take a list of questions for each teacher. One question that's always good to ask is, “What can I do to help my child learn at home?”
- Listen carefully to what the teachers say. They will probably have comments about your youngster's classroom behavior and social adjustment as well as his academic progress.
- Write down the teachers' comments and recommendations. That way, you'll have them to refer to when you get home. ♥



Being a friend

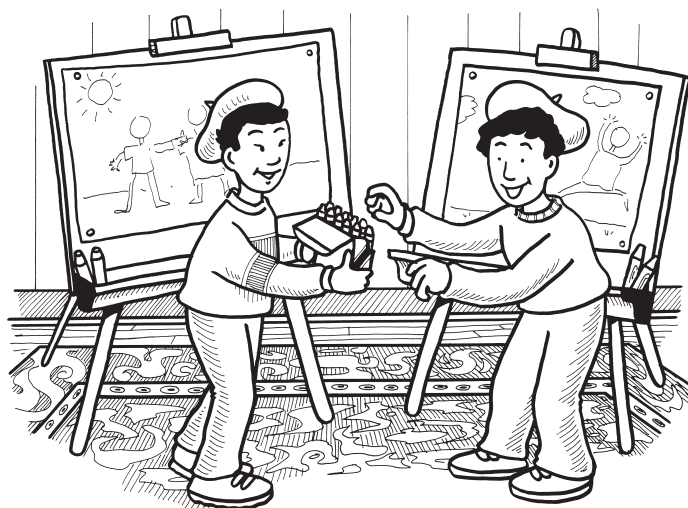
Would you like your child to make more friends? Try coaching him in how to be the kind of friend that other kids are naturally drawn to. Here are some “friendly” behaviors you can help your child master.

Smile

Children (and adults) enjoy being around people who are happy. Encourage your child to smile and make eye contact when he meets others.

Share

Generosity is contagious. Suggest that your child share with friends and classmates. Explain that they will be more likely to share with her in return.



Listen

Everyone likes it when others listen to what they have to say. Encourage your youngster to ask others about themselves. *Tip:* If your child is shy, help him practice conversation starters, like “Which class are you in?” or “I like soccer. Do you play?”

Be a good sport

Good sportsmanship is an important part of being a good friend. Challenge your child to say, “Great game! Thanks for playing with me!” after a game—whether she wins or loses. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Shocking science

Help your youngster understand static electricity with this activity.

First, put on a pair of wool socks and scuff your feet across a carpet. Then, carefully touch a metal doorknob. Did you feel a slight shock?

Explain to your child that everything around us is made of tiny particles called atoms.

Some atoms have electrical charges. The charges can be positive or negative, and they can be transferred from one thing to another. If a positive charge and a negative charge meet, they create a small electrical current.

The wool socks and carpet rubbing together build up a positive charge on your body. The doorknob has a negative charge. When they come together, static electricity is created, which causes the shock. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Special moments

Our family schedule is busy, but we always make sure to have one-on-one time with our son. I've found that the end of the day is best for our family.

We truly enjoy this special time together. Michael likes to goof around as he lays out his clothes for the next day, picking silly combinations just to hear me groan and say, “No, no, no! That's all wrong!” Then, we giggle like crazy. My husband just shakes his head and laughs at all the ruckus. Finally, we all pile onto Michael's bed for story time. Usually we take turns reading a favorite book aloud.

Our daily ritual gives us a chance to spend time together. It's a wonderful way to end each day on a happy note. ♥



Q & A Snoozy February

Q: My girls are getting crankier and harder to wake up as the school year goes on. I make sure they get plenty of sleep each night. What can I do to perk them up in the morning?

A: Lots of youngsters crave more sleep and have a more difficult time waking up during the short days of winter. Try this suggestion to ease morning crankiness.

About 15 minutes before your children need to get out of bed, turn on a few lights throughout the house and play some soft music. The lights and music will cue them that it's morning and give them a few minutes to prepare for the alarm to go off.

When the alarm finally rings, turn on brighter lights. Your youngsters will feel more awake and energetic and be ready to start their day. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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