

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

January 2005

#### SHORT NOTES



**“Parents are readers, too!”**

If you'd like your youngster to read more, try being a reading role model. Make regular visits to the library to check out books for yourself, and spend some time reading each day. You'll show your child that reading and learning are important to grownups, too.

#### Weekly cleanup

Is your youngster's book bag a junk magnet? To solve the clutter, try a Friday cleanup. Have your youngster dump out the bag at the end of each week, throw away old papers and trash, and neatly repack whatever is left.

#### Weather geography

To give your child's geography skills a boost, try looking at daily weather reports together on television, online, or in the newspaper. See if your youngster can pinpoint his hometown, state, and state capital on the weather maps.

#### Worth quoting

“Be the change that you want to see in the world.” *Mahatma Gandhi*

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Teacher:** John, did your sister help you with this homework?

**John:** Oh, no. She did it all!



## Perseverance pointers

We all admire people who try hard and keep going even when things get tough. Here are several ways you can help your youngster develop that kind of perseverance.

**Find heroes.** Give your child examples of people who became great by working hard.

*Examples:* Thomas Edison, who kept trying new ideas until something worked; Pelé, who practiced every day to become one of the world's best soccer players. Children want to be like the people they admire—the right heroes can inspire them!

**Help your youngster set goals.**

It's easier for kids to keep working on something when they have goals. Help your child think of specific, achievable ones for himself, such as “In my next game, I'm going to kick the ball straight when I pass.” Then, encourage him to



work toward his goal by regularly practicing his kicking skills.

**Encourage effort.** Send the message that trying hard is what counts. If your child works hard to learn to play the piano, for example, praise her for her continuing efforts. She'll feel proud for doing her best, and be eager to keep at it!

**Talk it up.** Believe it or not, kids listen to their parents. If you talk about how you admire people who work hard and never give up, chances are your youngster will adopt those values for himself. ♥

#### PARENT TO PARENT

### Meaningful discussions

My husband and I wanted to help our daughter develop a stronger vocabulary. So, we began using lots of new words in daily conversations with her.

For example, when we took a trip to the zoo, we talked about how lions are *predators*, and zebras are one of their favorite *prey*. At the laundromat, we showed her the *agitator* in the washing machine and then explained that people can be *agitated*, too.

Everywhere we went, we tried to use new vocabulary words in our conversations. It worked! New words seemed to stick in our daughter's mind when we made them part of her daily life. ♥



## Direction, please!

What is one of the most important things your youngster can learn? If you answered, "How to follow directions," you're right! Kids need to be able to follow directions to complete tasks, master new skills, and succeed in school. Share these three steps with your child.

**1. Make the instructions "step one."** Kids are often impatient and skip the directions to get to the "real" activity. Encourage your youngster to think of reading the instructions as the first step of any project or assignment.

**2. Read, listen, and repeat.** Suggest that your child read written directions or listen to verbal instructions all the



way through. Then, have her repeat the directions to herself. Repeating them will improve her understanding.

**3. Put them in order.** Ask your youngster to think through the logical order of instructions before starting. For example, for a recipe that says to mix together sugar and melted butter, she would need to melt the butter first, and then start mixing. ♥

## Q & A Dealing with step-discipline

**Q:** My stepsons stay with us on weekends. They refuse to do homework or chores, because they say they "don't live here." What can I do?

**A:** You've hit on a common problem in stepfamilies—discipline. Your stepsons have figured out that no one is setting or enforcing rules for them in your home.

If you'd like to turn things around, calmly discuss the problem with your spouse. Together, decide on some ground rules for the boys, such as "Beds must be made in the morning," and, "Homework gets done on Sunday afternoon."

Keep in mind that it's usually best for the parent to handle discipline in blended families, at least in the beginning. You might consider being the one to explain the new rules to the boys, and having your spouse enforce them as necessary. ♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### All the presidents' money

Is your child's knowledge of U.S. presidents shaky? You can help him just by opening your wallet and letting him look at the coins and bills.

Start by asking your youngster if he notices something that each piece of money has in common. *Answer:* Most feature a portrait of a U.S. president (except dollar coins and \$10 and \$100 bills). Then, go on a currency treasure hunt to find the answers to questions like, "Why were these presidents honored with their own coins or bills?"

For a list of the presidents featured on U.S. currency, visit [www.presidentsusa.net/coinsstamps.html](http://www.presidentsusa.net/coinsstamps.html). To find presidential biographies, visit your local library or go online to [www.kidinfo.com/american\\_history/presidents.html](http://www.kidinfo.com/american_history/presidents.html). ♥



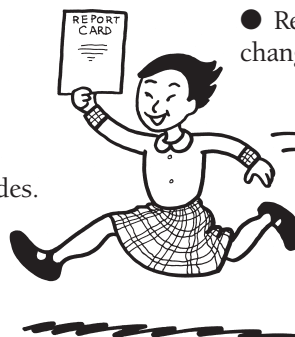
## Report cards: Taming the chills and thrills

For many kids and parents, report cards are a roller-coaster ride of thrill and dread. Try smoothing out the ride by following these tips:

- As report card time approaches, think about your youngster's work during the grading period. Her report card grades will probably look a lot like her homework and test grades. This mental review will help you know what to expect.
- When you receive your child's report card, look for

things to praise. You'll put her at ease if you start by pointing out where she's doing well, like keeping the same good grades in her favorite subject.

- Remember that kids can't change the grades they've already received. They can only work on getting better ones next time. If your child's grades need improvement, brainstorm ways for her to bring them up. ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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