

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

March 2005

SHORT NOTES



Writing pointer

When your child has trouble starting to write a story or an essay, encourage him to prewrite. Have him jot down all his ideas—no matter how silly he thinks they seem. Reviewing the ideas will help him get started, as well as organize his thoughts.

Letting kids shine

You can celebrate your children's abilities by setting aside a night each month for "talent time." Your kids could sing or play a musical instrument, read a favorite poem, or simply count to 100. *Hint:* Share a talent of your own.

Patience, patience

Would you like your youngster to develop more patience? Try reading a favorite chapter book, baking cookies, or planting a garden together. Each of these activities has a built-in waiting period that will help your child learn the rewards that come from being patient.

Worth quoting

"If we all did the things we are capable of, we would astound ourselves."
Thomas Edison

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What gets wetter the more it dries?

A: A towel!



Navigating decisions

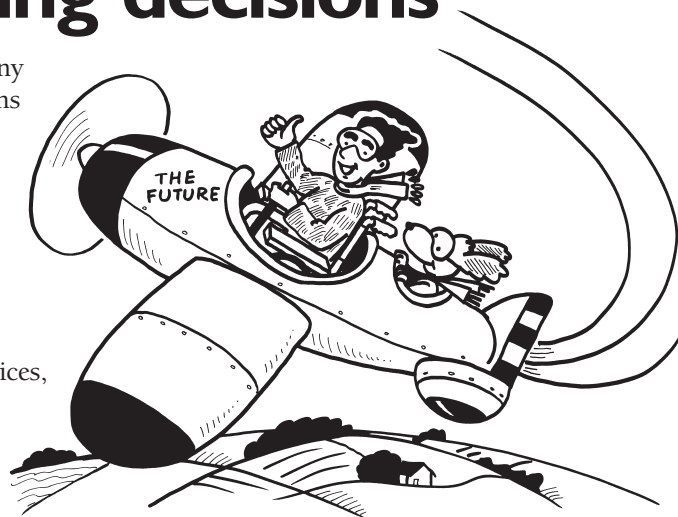
Kids have to make many different kinds of decisions throughout their lives. You can help your youngster learn decision-making skills he can use now and in the future. Here's how.

Start small. Let your youngster make daily choices, such as picking an outfit for school or deciding whether to take or buy lunch. Give him options if he needs help, but let him have the final say. He'll be gaining experience in making decisions on his own.

Plot a destination. Help your child figure out what she wants to accomplish. If she decides that she wants to finish her homework before dinner, she may have to choose between phoning a friend and starting her homework right away. Thinking about the end result can make decisions easier.

Step back. Allow your youngster to experience the consequences of his choices. For example, if he wears a T-shirt to school when it's snowing outside, he may be too cold to enjoy recess. Experiencing consequences—good and bad—will help develop your child's judgment and give him a better idea of where his choices will lead him.

Discuss results. Without criticizing, ask your child how she thinks a particular decision worked out. Would she do it again, or choose to do something different? She'll learn



to evaluate her own choices, which will help her make better decisions in the future. ♥

Talk about drugs

Children are never too young to learn about drugs and why they shouldn't use them. Try these simple suggestions for talking to your kids:

- Start by telling your youngsters that drugs are chemicals. They make some people feel good for a little while, but they are dangerous to the body and mind.
- Explain that drugs can make them physically sick. Drugs can also make it hard to concentrate on schoolwork, so kids who use them are more likely to get poor grades.



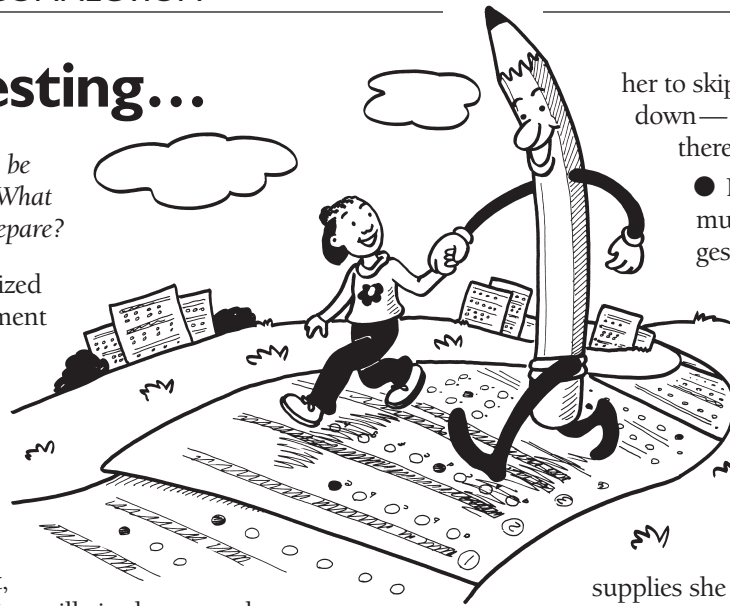
Note: For more age-appropriate tips on discussing drugs with your children, visit www.talkingwithkids.org/drugs.html. ♥

Q & A Testing, testing...

Q: My daughter will soon be taking standardized tests. What are they, and how can I help her prepare?

A: Schools administer standardized tests to measure student achievement as compared to other students in the school, district, and state, and across the country. Use these suggestions to help your child do her best:

- Some standardized tests have time limits. Encourage your child to quickly look over the test, from beginning to end. This preview will give her a rough idea of how long it will take her to finish each section. Also, tell



her to skip any section that slows her down—she can go back to it later if there's time.

- Many standardized tests use multiple-choice questions. Suggest that your youngster guess if she doesn't know an answer. Tell her that her instincts are usually correct, so she will probably choose the right answer with her first guess.

Note: On test day, your child should arrive at school on time. Be sure she has the supplies she needs, such as several number No. 2 pencils with erasers, and a snack or drink if allowed. ♥



Online safety

The online world is an amazing place, but it has dangers, too. To make sure your child stays safe on the Web, share these tips with her:



- ▲ Don't give out personal information, like your name or address.
- ▲ Don't share your e-mail or other program passwords.
- ▲ Tell a parent if someone or something makes you feel uncomfortable while online.
- ▲ Don't open e-mail attachments without a parent's approval. Attachments can contain computer viruses.
- ▲ Ask before downloading anything online. A parent should check to see that a program or file is appropriate for you and that it will work on your computer system. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Community cleanup

The last time I took my kids to our neighborhood playground, there was so much trash on the ground that they couldn't play. They were really upset and wanted to do something about it.

After talking together, we came up with the idea of holding a cleanup day in the spring. I helped the boys make flyers inviting our neighbors to join us. We printed copies and went door to door to hand them out—me on foot and the boys on their bikes.

What a great idea! Lots of families came out to help, and now the playground is beautiful and safe to play in again. The boys were so proud to have made a difference. And, best of all, they realized how good it feels to be involved in a worthwhile project. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Water symphony

Did you know that water can make beautiful music? Try making these three water instruments with your youngster.

Glass piano

Fill a drinking glass with an inch or two of water. Have your child lightly wet one finger and swirl it around the rim.

Water flute

Put some water in a clean glass or plastic bottle. Let your youngster blow across the opening.



Bottle drum

Add water to a clean plastic bottle or jug, and cover it tightly with the cap. Your child can slap the sides of the container with his hands.

Hint: Different levels of water will make different tones. For example, a small amount of water produces a high note; more water makes a low tone. Experiment with different amounts of water to see how many sounds you and your child can create. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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