

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

May 2005



SHORT NOTES

Paying compliments

Here's a character-building tip for your family. Encourage your children to say at least one nice thing to someone every day. Let them know when you hear them give compliments. *Example:* "It was nice of you to thank your grandmother for the yummy dinner last night."

DID YOU KNOW?

Reading aloud to your kids is important, even after they're able to read on their own. But how much is enough? Experts recommend reading to children at least four times a week, for 8 to 10 minutes at a stretch.

Vaccination update

Most schools require students to have specific immunizations before beginning school in the fall. Make sure your youngster's vaccinations are up-to-date. You can ask the school for a list of required shots, or check online at www.cdc.gov/nip/recs/child-schedule.pdf.

Worth quoting

"It is difficult to give away kindness. It keeps coming back to you."
Cort Flint

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What should you do if you find a gorilla in your bed?

A: Sleep somewhere else!



Summer science

The last day of school doesn't have to be your youngster's last day of learning. Try science activities like these to keep your child's brain engaged after school lets out.

Ready, set, grow

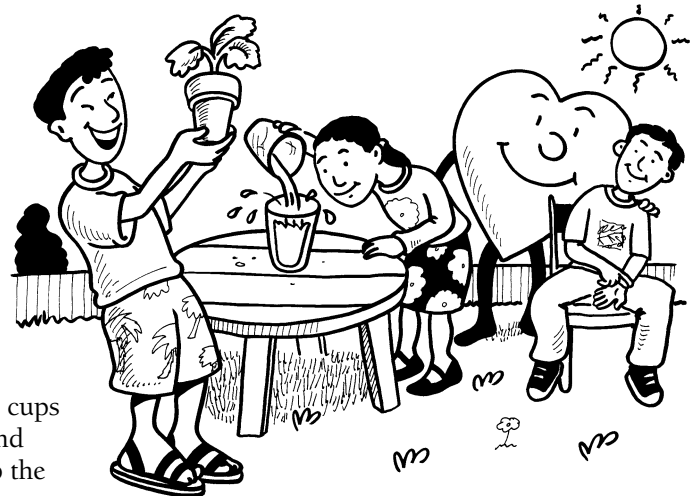
Fill two paper cups with soil. Plant one bean seed in each cup. Put the cups in a warm, sunny spot, and have your youngster keep the soil moist until the seeds sprout. Then, put one cup under a lamp and the other one outside in the sun. Encourage your child to check the sprouts each day. Which one grows better? Can he figure out why?

Stuck like glue

Ask your child to fill a glass with water all the way to the top. Then, challenge her to add just a little more water. What happens to the water before it spills? (It will form a small mound that rises above the rim of the glass.) Explain to your youngster that water molecules tend to stick together. This "clinginess" is called surface tension.

Heart to heart

Does your youngster know that his heart beats at different speeds throughout the day? While your child sits quietly, show him how to feel his pulse by putting two fingers on



his neck below his jaw line. Then, have him try it after skipping outside for a minute. What's the difference? When he's active, his heart beats faster. When he's resting, it beats more slowly. ♥

Curious questions

"Mom, how do planes stay up in the air?" Sound familiar? Children are naturally inquisitive. Try these suggestions to promote your youngster's curiosity:



■ Express interest. You could say something like, "That's a great question! Planes are so heavy, you'd think they wouldn't be able to fly."

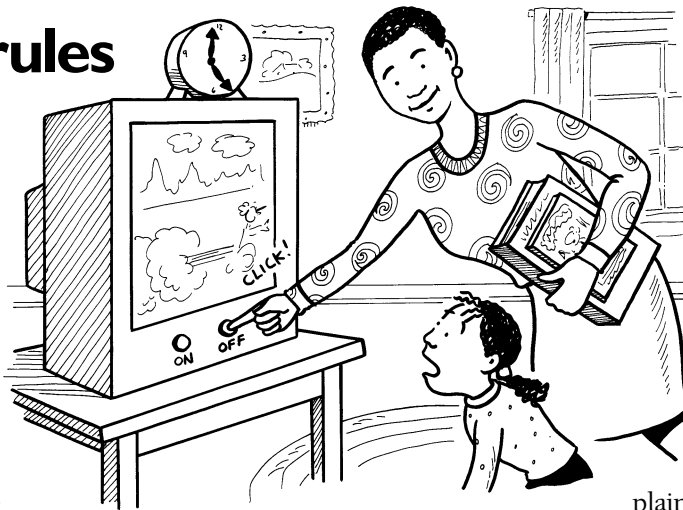
■ Ask for opinions. Challenge your child to think about his question. "How do you think planes stay in the air?"

■ Answer the question together. Ask your youngster if she can think of ways to find the answer. *Examples:* doing research online, reading a book at the library, asking a pilot. ♥

The 1-2-3s of rules

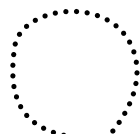
Like many parents, you may find that you've been letting your child get away with some things, like watching too much TV. But after letting it slide for so long, how can you turn things around? Here's how.

1 Start now. Once you've decided to make a change, get started as soon as you can. Tell your youngster calmly and firmly that there's going to be a new rule, such as "one hour of TV a day, after homework is finished."



2 Explain results. Let your child know how you will enforce the rule and what will happen if she breaks it. *Example:* "We'll use a timer when you watch television. If you go over one hour, you won't be allowed to watch TV the next day." Then, be sure to enforce the rule every day.

3 Counter protests. Be ready for complaints. Before your youngster tries to argue you out of the new rule, it may help to tell him the reason behind it. "Less television will give you more time to play, read, and do homework." ♥

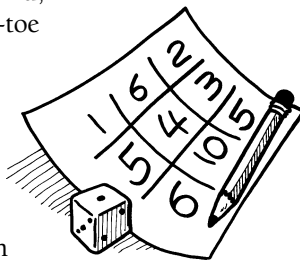


ACTIVITY CORNER

Tic-tac-toe math

Could your kids use a change from the usual addition and subtraction drills? Try playing this game.

For each child, draw a tic-tac-toe board on paper. Roll one die and put the number in the top left square of each board. Roll twice more and put the numbers in the other two top squares.



Then, let your kids take turns rolling numbers for the middle squares on their boards. Have them add the top and middle numbers, column by column, and put the results in the bottom squares. Help them total the three columns. The child with the highest total after five rounds is the winner. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

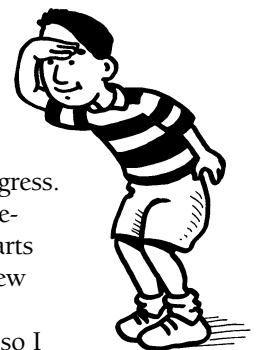
Looking ahead

Springtime is always hectic, but I've discovered a few things I can do now to get my son's next school year off to a great start.

I request a meeting with my child's teacher to discuss his progress. We review his grades and test results, as well as areas for improvement. This year, his teacher suggested we work on his language arts skills over the summer by having him write in a journal and review vocabulary words on a regular basis.

I also help my son collect his classmates' telephone numbers so I can set up playdates throughout the summer. Seeing his friends during the break keeps him excited about the upcoming school year.

Finally, I try to schedule medical checkups and other appointments during the summer months. That way, my son doesn't miss important classroom time once school begins. ♥



Q & A Stay informed

Q: My ex-wife and I share custody of our daughter. But I don't always get to see the school papers she brings home on the days she's not with me. How can I get this information?

A: First, let your ex-wife know that you want to stay on top of what's going on in school. Suggest that each of you return the papers to your child's backpack once you have looked at them. That way, you'll both be able to review them when your daughter is at your respective homes. Consider placing a special folder or an envelope in her book bag for this purpose.

You might also ask your daughter's teacher if the school posts copies of announcements or an events calendar on its Web site. Some schools also maintain an e-mail distribution list for sending special notices to parents. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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