

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

December 2005

SHORT NOTES



Homework hint

Here's a way to help your kids take a big bite out of evening homework. Encourage them to keep a textbook or some homework handy to study on the way home from school or before after-school activities start. A few minutes here and there can really add up.

Quick peek at careers

You can help your child start thinking about possible careers by browsing the Bureau of Labor Statistics kid-friendly Web site at www.bls.gov/k12. Your youngster can click on topics that interest her, like computers, building and fixing things, or helping others, and find out how they can turn into a career.

"Stress-free" day

Feeling stressed? Your children probably are, too. Try planning a "stress-free" day. Pick one weekend day to keep free of work, chores, and other commitments. Together, make a favorite dessert, browse through family photographs, or rent a special movie for everyone to enjoy. The entire family will feel refreshed!

Worth quoting

"The greatest glory in living lies not in never falling, but in rising every time we fall." *Nelson Mandela*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why was the centipede always late for soccer practice?

A: It took him too long to put on his shoes!



Building trustworthiness

If you could help your youngster develop a specific character trait, what would it be? One good choice would be trustworthiness. Here are some ideas for cultivating this important trait in your child.

Trustworthy children are...

Responsible

■ Make sure your child knows you expect him to take care of his own belongings (school supplies, sports equipment, toys) as well as help out at home (water the plants, carry groceries).

■ Teach him to express responsibility with his words. For example, saying, "I spilled the milk" instead of "The milk spilled" helps him to accept responsibility for his actions.

Honest

■ Talk with your youngster about the importance of honesty. Explain that when someone lies, trust is broken. Let him know that rebuilding trust can be difficult and take a long time.

■ Praise honest acts. If your child turns in a lost wallet or admits to breaking a window, tell him you admire his truthfulness. He'll learn that honesty feels good!

Reliable

■ Set an example. Let your child see you following through on your own promises. "It's late, but I promised to shoot baskets with you. I'll be right out!"

■ Offer help. For instance, if your child has agreed to rake a neighbor's leaves, show him where the rake and trash bags are located so



he can get the job done. He will learn that others take his promises seriously. ♥

Super brain stretchers

Looking for ways to sharpen your children's creative-thinking skills? Here are some fun brain-boosting games:

- Pick four objects and challenge your youngsters to find ways they're related. *Example:* grapefruit, hay, fish, nuts. (*Answer:* They are all types of food for different creatures.)
- Choose an item and see if your kids can come up with new uses for it. *Example:* A blank CD could be a bike reflector.
- Pose a problem, such as being pushed by another child during recess. Assign each player a character from a familiar book, like Arthur or Pippi Longstocking, and ask how the character would solve the problem. ♥

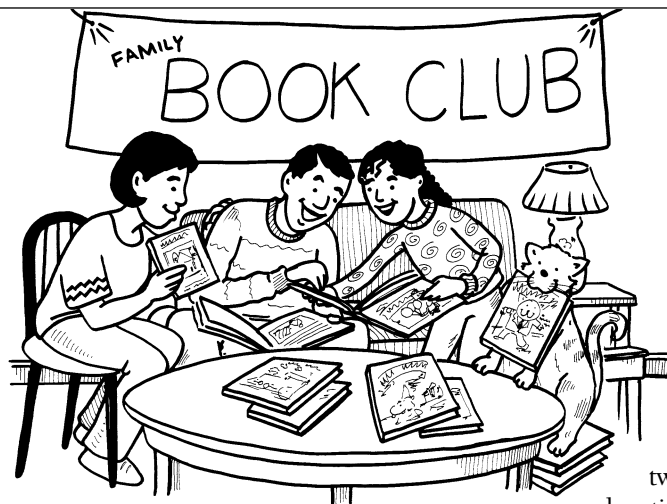


A family book club

Sharing books is a great way to spend time with your children and give them a passion for reading. One way to share books is to create your own family book club. Here's how.

Chapter 1: Getting started

To start a book club, first pick a book that everyone will like. Then, each of you agree to read a certain amount on your own (for example, one chapter a day). You can share one book or check out several copies at the library.



Chapter 2: Setting the scene

To make reading time feel extra-special, try sitting next to each other on soft floor pillows or wrapping up together in a cozy blanket. Offer a snack or something to drink.

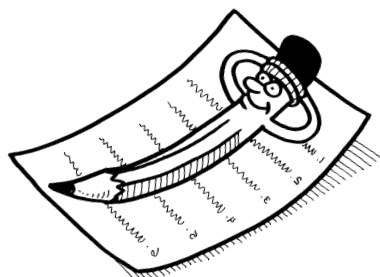
Chapter 3: The wrap-up

When everyone has finished reading a chapter or two (or the entire story), schedule a time to discuss what you've read. Use questions like these to get the conversation rolling: Did you like the characters? Would you have done the same things they did? Talking about the story will help your children think about what they have just read. And that's a great way to build reading comprehension skills! ♥

Tip-top test taking

Could your child use some test-taking advice? Try sharing these pointers:

▲ Make a "refresher sheet." While you study for the test, jot down key words, dates, and other facts on a sheet of paper. Use the sheet to refresh your memory the night before the test.



▲ Ask a parent or an older sibling to create a practice test for you by making up questions from your textbook or class notes.

▲ Be sure you understand the test directions. If they aren't clear to you, ask the teacher for help.

▲ Remember to keep your cool. Take a moment to breathe deeply and relax before starting the test. Relaxing will help you focus. ♥

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

Password to safety

One day I got tied up in a meeting at work, so I asked a friend to pick my son up from school. When she got there, Ben refused to get in the car with her because he didn't recognize her!

I was happy that Ben wouldn't accept a ride with someone he thought was a stranger. But I realized that we needed some kind of signal to let him know when it was okay to leave with someone other than his dad and me.

So we made up a special password. Our rule now is that if I send someone else to pick Ben up, I give that person the password. If he or she says the password, Ben knows it's okay to get in the car. Otherwise, we told Ben to go to the school office and call either me or his dad. Having this password system in place has made all of us feel more secure. ♥

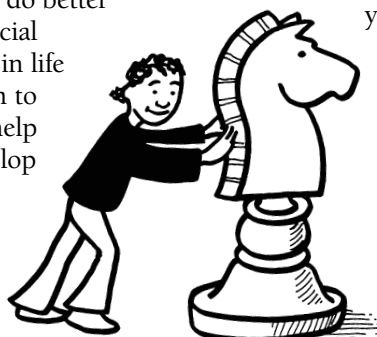


Q & A

Put patience into practice

Q: My daughter is so impatient. Everything has to happen right away, or she gets frustrated and gives up. What can I do?

A: Youngsters do better in school, in social situations, and in life if they can learn to be patient. To help your child develop patience, try doing things with her that take time,



like putting together a giant jigsaw puzzle, building a model car, or playing chess or a board game.

Help your youngster think of things she could do when she's feeling impatient. If you're stuck in traffic, you might turn on her favorite radio station so she can sing along, or play a game like Twenty Questions.

Also, be specific about how long she'll need to be patient. For instance, instead of saying, "We'll leave in a little while," say, "We'll leave right after dinner." ♥