

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

September 2005

SHORT NOTES



Editing tip

Does your child write his school assignments using a computer? If so, remind him that the spell-check and grammar functions on computers aren't foolproof—mistakes can still slip through. Encourage him to proofread with his own eyes, too.

DID YOU KNOW?

One in six children between the ages of 6 and 19 are overweight. Kids (and adults) tend to overeat if they're served too much food. To help your youngsters stay slim, serve child-sized portions. For guidelines, check out http://kidshealth.org/parent/nutrition_fit/nutrition/pyramid.html.

Trust me

When you know your child is telling a fib, resist the urge to call her a liar. Say, "That doesn't sound like the truth to me. Think about what happened, and we'll talk again in a few minutes." You'll give her an opportunity to tell the truth without criticizing her.

Worth quoting

"Kindness is like sugar. It makes life taste a little sweeter." *Carla Yerovi*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What's the hardest part of skydiving?

A: The ground!



"Go-o-o, school!"

If you want to get your child pumped up about learning, a pep rally may be going a bit overboard. Instead, try some of the following suggestions. They're not as flashy as a pair of pom-poms, but they're sure to put some "Rah, rah!" in your youngster's school experience!



Talk the talk

Kids pick up their parents' feelings about school and learning. Whenever possible, look for opportunities to express your enthusiasm. *Example:* "Wow! That's really interesting. Can you tell me more?" Your youngster just might get the idea that school is an exciting place to be.

Be a model

Actions speak louder than words, so don't forget to *show* your youngster that learning is cool, too. *Examples:* Go online or to the library to find out how a DVD player works; share an interesting article about a favorite celebrity; invite your child to learn to make a craft with you.

Make it real

Does your youngster have a hobby or interest she absolutely loves? Try linking her obsession to school subjects. For example, if she's wild about ponies, you might relate her social studies homework to horses. ("I see you're reading about Asia. Did you know the Mongols were famous horse riders?") Even tough subjects will

seem more fun when your child connects them to something she enjoys. ♥

Finding time for family

Families today are busier than ever, and life can get even more hectic when school is in session. How can you make "together time" possible for your family? Here are several ideas.



Commit. Decide how you'll spend your time together, and make it a priority. *Examples:* shared mealtimes, evening read-alouds.

Schedule. Mark everyone's schedule on a calendar, including family time. You'll be more apt to take this time seriously if you plan ahead.

Trim. Help everyone pare down busy schedules. Set an example by saying no to activities that make you feel rushed or that interfere with family time. ♥

Everyday math

Could your youngsters use a little extra practice with math skills? You can build math into your everyday activities and have fun at the same time. Here's how.

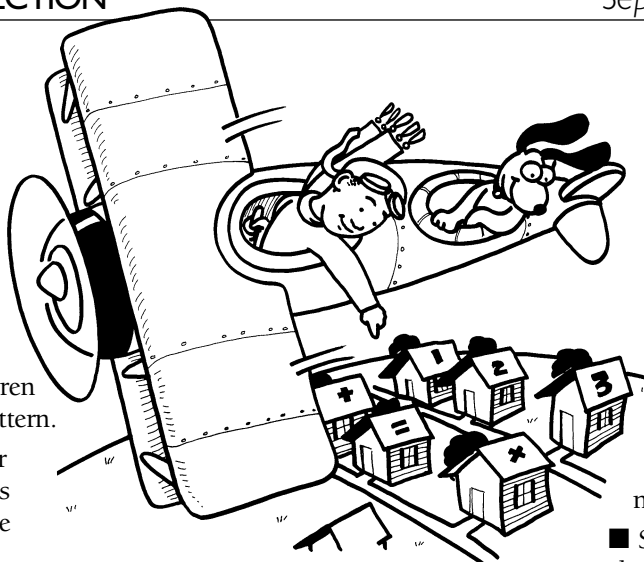
Patterns

■ At the table, set one place with a napkin and utensils. Challenge your children to set additional places using the same pattern.

■ Read a poem together. Then, see if your kids can identify a pattern. *Examples:* Does each line end in the same sound? Have the same number of beats?

Measurement

■ Give your youngsters practice with fractions by asking them to double the ingredients in a recipe.



■ Have your children estimate the size of a teaspoon of salt by letting them pour some into their hands. Then, measure it. How close were they?

Calculations

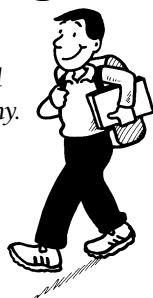
■ When your children ask, "How much longer?" figure it out together. "You weeded one-third of the garden in ten minutes. The next two-thirds should take..."

■ Send your youngsters on a math scavenger hunt. For example, see if they can find $5 + 10$ pieces of candy, 3×4 pennies, $8 - 6$ keys, or $9 \div 3$ crayons. ♥



Q & A Anti-bullying tips

Q: My son is small for his age and somewhat shy. I'm worried that he might become a target for bullies. What can I do?



A: You're smart to take bullying seriously. Bullying makes kids anxious and can leave emotional scars. Here are several ways to "bully-proof" your child.

Kids who have good friends are less likely to be bullied. Give your child the chance to make friends by encouraging him to invite classmates over and to get involved in clubs or sports.

Help your youngster practice ways to respond if he's bullied. Sometimes firmly saying, "Leave me alone," and walking away may be enough. If the bullying continues, he should tell a parent or other trusted grown-up right away.

You might also discuss your fears with your child's teacher. Ask her to let you know if she sees any signs of trouble. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a "funny file"

Looking for a way to encourage your kids to read and write? Make a "funny file" with them! Start by reading the newspaper comics together. Clip the ones you agree are funniest, and put them in a folder. Then, try one of these ideas.



Read them when friends visit. Your children will love sharing their favorite comics during playdates.

Swap favorites by mail. Have your youngsters write letters to family and friends and tuck a "funny file" comic inside the envelope. Encourage the recipients to send new comic strips back when they reply.

Tip: You can also search newspapers and magazines for funny stories, quotes, and jokes to add to your file. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

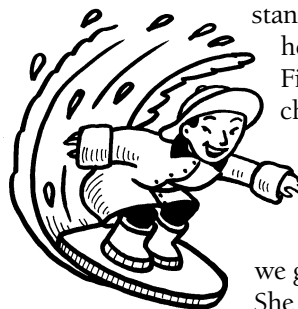
Finding solutions solo

My daughter Trisha used to be stumped whenever she had a problem to solve. I decided to tell her about the steps of problem solving that I'd learned at a recent job seminar. I started with an obvious problem, like deciding what to wear on a rainy day, so I could easily explain the steps.

The first step is to state the problem. For this example, it's getting wet while walking to the school

bus. For the next step, we agreed that the goal is to stay dry all the way to school. Then, we brainstormed ways to keep dry, such as wearing a slicker or standing in the doorway of the house until the bus arrived. Finally, the last step is to choose a solution. Trisha chose carrying an umbrella to the bus stop.

Now, whenever my daughter has a problem, we go through the steps together. She almost always comes up with her own solution! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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