

# Home & School

## CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

November 2006

Minford Elementary School Title 1

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### SHORT NOTES

#### World reader

Improve your child's reading and geography skills with this combination: a blank world map, crayons, and a library card. Have her borrow books featuring different nations and then color in each country after she reads about it. *Note:* Print a blank map from [www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/world\\_country.pdf](http://www.eduplace.com/ss/maps/pdf/world_country.pdf), and use an atlas to locate the countries.

#### Taking turns

Help your youngster learn fairness by encouraging him to take turns. *Example:* "Javier, you've been playing with that toy for 10 minutes. Let's give Marcus 10 minutes now." Explain that this is a friendly way to act—and that he'll be more likely to get turns if he gives them!

#### Too much TV?

American children average more than four hours a day in front of the television. That's more than 28 hours a week they could be playing with friends, doing homework, exercising, or reading. To keep kids' brains and bodies active, try limiting TV to an hour a day.

#### Worth quoting

"Take pride in how far you have come. Have faith in how far you can go."  
*Anonymous*

### JUST FOR FUN



#### Teacher:

What do you think you'll be after you graduate?

**Student:** Old.

## R is for "responsibility"

Who gets Jason up for school? Packs his sports equipment for a game? Puts his clean clothes away?

The answer? Jason! That's because his parents are working hard to build responsibility in their son.

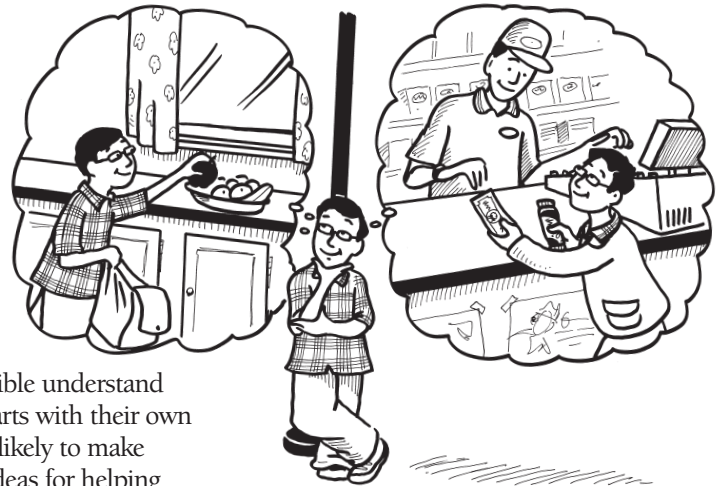
Kids who are responsible understand that success or failure starts with their own actions, so they're more likely to make good choices. Here are ideas for helping your child develop this important trait.

#### Up and at 'em!

Put your youngster in charge of waking himself up for school and weekend activities. Give him his own alarm clock, and show him how to set it. He will learn to rely on himself to get moving in the morning.

#### Spend or save?

Consider a regular allowance as a way to build financial responsibility. The amount could cover some expenses, such as lunchtime snacks and holiday



gifts, and include room for saving. With a limited allowance, your child will learn to think carefully about spending choices. *Example:* He might decide to take a snack from home rather than buy one at school.

#### Expect help

Assign chores so your child knows he's expected to pitch in. Younger children could dust and set the table, while older ones could vacuum and do laundry. Completing tasks will help your child feel good about himself and let him know that he can contribute to the family. ♥

### What's that word?

In between the news and the comics, you can find a great tool for increasing your child's vocabulary.

Using today's newspaper, have your youngster pick an article and circle any words she doesn't know. Then, ask her to reread the article and see if she can guess the words' meanings from the context. Give her some hints: She could look for clues in the surrounding sentences and photos or find synonyms (words with the same meaning) for her "mystery word."

Let your child guess the definition and then check it in a dictionary. Give her a high five for each one she gets right! ♥



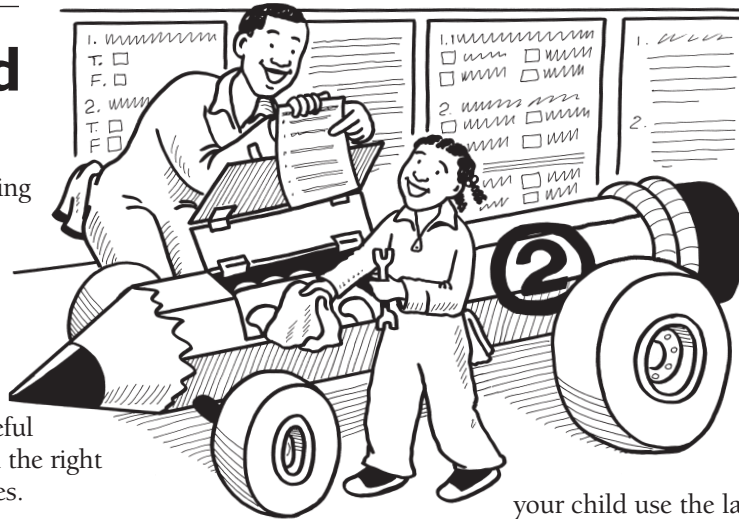
# Get pumped for tests

Does your child need a testing tune-up? Use these sure-fire strategies for helping her turn test days into success days.

## Read the instructions.

Coach your youngster to slow down and read directions all the way through. Careful reading can help her get off on the right foot and avoid careless mistakes.

**Read the questions.** Encourage your child to read the test questions carefully, too. If she skims them, she could miss important clues (“always” or “never” in



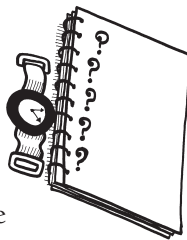
multiple-choice questions) or specific directions (“explain” or “compare and contrast” in essay questions).

**Check numbers.** When answering on a separate sheet, your youngster should regularly check to make sure the number of each answer matches the number of the question.

**Double back.** Suggest that your child use the last few minutes of test time to double-check her answers. She should look for spelling and grammar errors, try to fill in any questions she skipped, and rework math problems. Remind her that, when in doubt, her first instinct is often right! ♥



# Conferences that click



Fifteen minutes to review your child’s past three months? That’s a tall order! Make the most of parent-teacher conference time with these tips.

✔ **Take notes.** Before the conference, jot down any concerns you have about your child, along with questions about the curriculum. Take your notes along as a reminder.

✔ **Be on time.** Teachers are usually on a tight schedule for conferences. If you’re punctual, you’ll have the maximum talk time.

✔ **Stay calm.** If there are problems, focus on ways to work with the teacher on solutions. Kids benefit when parents and teachers are on the same page.

✔ **Plan the next step.** Discuss how you will follow up on issues raised. You could swap e-mail addresses or phone numbers (jot down best times to talk) or schedule another meeting. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Smoother holidays

Every year, it was the same thing. Relatives arrived for the big holiday meal, expecting our children to have nice table manners and polite answers to all their questions. The reality was far from that, and the stress was more than I could handle!

So last year I started a new tradition. We began “practice meals” several weeks before the real thing. Once a week, we dressed up for supper, ate in the dining room, and took turns asking and answering questions about school and work. We also practiced passing food politely, using our silverware correctly, and excusing ourselves from the table.

The kids thought it was silly at first. But guess what? Now they like dress-up night, and they’ve gotten quite good at dinnertime talk. This year, I’m happy to say, I’m actually looking forward to our holiday meals! ♥

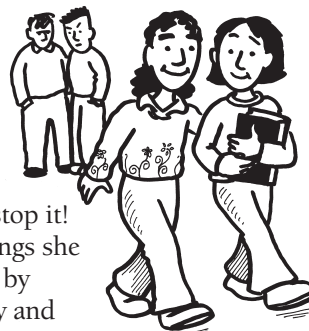


## Q & A Bullying: The bystander’s role

**Q:** My child came home from school upset because kids were picking on a classmate and wouldn’t let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?

**A:** Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she has the power to help stop it! There are several things she can do. She could start by standing up to the bully and

saying something like, “That’s not nice.” Then, she might ask the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.



Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: “Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee.” ♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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