

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®



SHORT NOTES

Tasty math

For some hands-on geometry practice, invite your youngster into the kitchen. Together, cut sandwiches into triangles, try to slice a pan of brownies into equal squares, or discuss how to divide a pizza among an odd number of people.

Listen up!

Having trouble getting your child's attention? Here's an idea teachers often use in the classroom. Rather than yelling, talk softly or even whisper. Chances are, your youngster will quiet down to hear what you're saying.

Where in the world?

Instead of throwing away opened mail, save it for geography practice. Give your child the envelope and ask her to look at the postmark. Can she locate the city on a map or tell you two facts about the state? *Examples:* It has lots of mountains; it's close to the ocean.

Worth quoting

"Be the change that you want to see in the world." *Mahatma Gandhi*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: What gets wetter the more it dries?

A: A towel!

Ready to learn

Setting up routines

Bruce and John are close friends with similar abilities. Bruce does well in school, but John struggles. He often seems tired and misses assignments.

Why the difference? One reason is that Bruce's family establishes daily routines to help him do his best. Consider the routines below to make your child feel more...

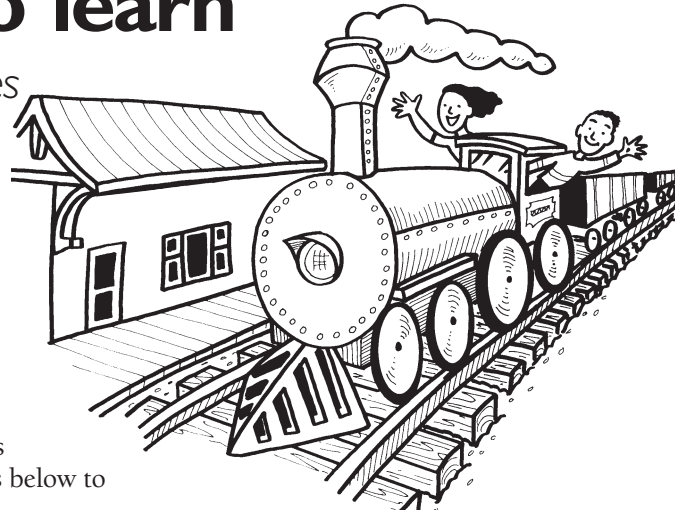
Relaxed. Music can help your child avoid the morning rush. Play a soothing tape and ask him to be dressed and ready by the time it's over. *Tip:* On Sundays, have him put each day's outfit for the coming week on hangers labeled Monday through Friday.

Energized. A good breakfast increases concentration. Offer your youngster healthy choices. *Examples:* a whole-wheat bagel with peanut butter; orange juice blended with fruit and yogurt; instant oatmeal.

Connected. Talking about the school day lets your child know you care. Ask him to share two good things that happened during the day. Prompt him with specific questions, such as "Which multiplication tables did you practice?"

Prepared. Studying a little every day is the best way to learn new material. Help your youngster choose a time for homework when he is most alert—and try not to change it.

Rested. A set bedtime helps kids fall asleep more quickly. Suggest that your child get in bed 15 minutes



early to read, make up stories, or talk quietly with you. ♥

For the love of reading

What's the best way to create a lifelong reader? Reading together! Reading is free, fun, and will bring you and your child closer. Find a time each day when you and your youngster can get cozy and enjoy a good book.

Here are three tips to help you choose stories:

1. Ask librarians, friends, and teachers for recommendations. *Tip:* If your child doesn't already have a library card, sign her up!
2. Find books that expand your youngster's interests (insects, outer space), deal with an event (a new baby, a visit to the dentist), and build character (friendship, truthfulness).
3. Pick stories for both information and enjoyment. Try real and make-believe stories and poems, as well as children's magazines. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Handling angry feelings

One morning, my daughter couldn't find her wallet. When she came to me for help, I yelled at her for losing the wallet—and the birthday money inside it. Tonya burst into tears. Realizing I had overreacted, I apologized for yelling and helped her find the wallet.

That night at dinner, we talked about anger. We started by sharing how we know when we're getting angry. Tonya said her face gets hot. My wife said her muscles tense up. I said I raise my voice.

Then, we brainstormed ways to handle angry feelings. Our list included taking several deep breaths, going for a five-minute walk, petting the dog, and thinking about the beach.

We also came up with a signal (snapping our fingers twice) to let other family members know we're angry. We agreed that when someone uses the signal, we'll give him or her a few minutes to calm down.

Tonya's missing wallet certainly taught us an important lesson about managing anger. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Sentences on a string

Help your child get the hang of sentence structure with this mixed-up activity.

Materials: books, pencil, paper, string, two chairs, clothespins or large paper clips



Start by picking a sentence from one of your youngster's favorite books. Write each word of the sentence on its own sheet of paper. Mix them up.

Next, tie a long piece of string between the backs of two chairs. Then, pin or clip the words to the string. Challenge your youngster to unscramble the sentence and hang the words in the right order.

Variation: For older readers, copy each sentence of a paragraph on a separate sheet of paper. Mix the papers up and clip them to the string. How quickly can your child put the paragraph in order? ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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You can do it!

Q: My best friend's kids seem ready and able to do anything. How can I help my children develop more confidence?

A: Build a can-do attitude in your youngsters by expecting that they can do things. Kids can do more than you think! Doing everything for them sends the message that they're helpless. Asking them to pitch in shows you believe in their abilities.



When your children try a task, like helping with laundry, resist the urge to take over at the first sign of trouble. Instead, show them how to do it themselves. Then, let them try it on their own, with your guidance.

If your youngsters are unsure about how to do something, encourage them to figure it out by asking, "What do you think the next step should be?" They'll realize they can think through problems by themselves. ♥

Note-taking tips

Taking notes in class can help kids listen and learn. It's a skill they will need in elementary school and beyond. Here are some suggestions you can pass along to your youngster.

Nice and neat. Try to write neatly. You want to be able to read and understand your notes later.

Short and sweet. It's not necessary to write down everything the teacher says. She may provide clues to

what's most important by repeating certain items or writing them on the board. To save time, you can use abbreviations or symbols. *Examples:* "b/n" for between, "#" for number.



Thorough and complete. Going back over your notes at study time can boost comprehension. Fill in any missing details, and make sure everything is clear. ♥