

Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2015

Community School

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SHORT NOTES

Read more

A family reading log is a good way to encourage your youngster—and the rest of the family—to read more. Each day, record the books, newspapers, or magazines you read. At the end of every month, let your youngster tally up the total. Keep going for the entire year to see how much your family can read in 2015!

DID YOU KNOW?

It may be cold outside, but classroom temperatures can vary. Have your child dress in layers, since he'll concentrate better if he's comfortable. He could wear a sweatshirt or a sweater over a T-shirt, for example, and add or remove layers as needed.

New ways to discipline

If timeouts aren't working anymore, consider adjusting your discipline plan. Some parents take away privileges when kids don't follow the rules. For instance, maybe your youngster isn't allowed to go to friends' houses for a few days if she doesn't do her chores, or she can't use the computer tomorrow if she exceeds her time limit today.

Worth quoting

"I am always doing that which I cannot do, in order that I may learn how to do it." *Pablo Picasso*

JUST FOR FUN

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

A: Sleep somewhere else!



Manage your time wisely

Some children find it easy to get ready for school on time, turn in classwork when it's due, and finish homework with time to spare.

Others rush around and struggle to get everything done. Good time-management skills make the difference. Share these strategies with your child.



Be realistic

Planning ahead will be easier if your youngster knows how long it takes him to finish homework or practice drums. Encourage him to estimate the time accurately by timing himself on each task for a week. Then, he'll have a better idea of how long to expect for doing addition problems vs. studying spelling words, for instance.

Say no to multitasking

Your child may think he can watch TV while he reads his social studies chapter, but chances are it'll take him twice as long—and he's likely to miss

important information. Suggest that he see for himself: Have him read one page with the TV on and one page with it off and then tell you about them. He'll probably remember more when he isn't watching TV.

Break it down

Help your youngster divide projects into chunks and pencil in each step on a calendar (do research, write report, make poster). The same strategy can work for studying and tests. For instance, if he has 30 minutes for a three-part test, he should scan the sections and budget his time for each one.♥

Be a kid who cares

Caring about others is a wonderful quality to have. Encourage your youngster to make it a habit with suggestions like these:

- If you come across a lost-pet flyer, let your child take a photo of it or write down the phone number. That way, she'll be able to call the owner if she spots the missing pet.

- When a friend or neighbor is sick, ask your youngster to pitch in to help along with you. You might make and deliver a casserole together or babysit during a doctor appointment. Seeing how you care about others—and follow through—will set a good example for her.♥



Play with science

What do blowing bubbles and jumping rope have to do with science? With these experiments, your youngster will find out.

Make bubbles. Let your child create bubbles by mixing 3 cups water, $\frac{1}{2}$ cup corn syrup, and 1 cup liquid dish soap. Then, have her experiment to see if she can make a better bubble recipe. She could try different amounts of the ingredients or add or substitute other items, such as sugar or glycerin (available at drugstores). For each attempt, she should measure the ingredients



used, list the amounts, and blow bubbles. Which recipe makes the biggest, the stretchiest, or the longest-lasting bubbles?

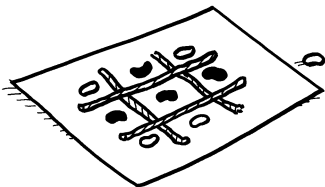
Jump rope. How does exercise affect your youngster's heart rate? Help her take her pulse. (She should place two fingers on the inside of her wrist, count the beats in 10 seconds, and multiply by 6 for the beats per minute.) Next, she can jump rope for 1 minute and take her pulse again. What changes? Explain that exercise works out her heart—just like it works out other muscles. *Idea:* She might try the experiment with other family members to see what happens to their heart rates.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Family night—unplugged

TVs, phones, radios—all of these require electricity. Your child may wonder how families had any fun in the old days! Give him a taste of history with this cozy evening “off the grid.”

1. Have your youngster turn off the lights, TV, and computers. Then, light candles (place them in a safe spot), and make animal “shadow puppets” on a wall. For instance, link your thumbs together and flap your fingers for a hawk. Can you guess each other's animals?
2. No radio? No problem! Play musical chairs or hot potato, and let your child sing “Pop Goes the Weasel.”



3. Play games using “low-tech” materials. *Examples:* twigs for pick-up sticks, yarn and two types of beans for tic-tac-toe. Or juggle socks filled with rice and tied with string—who can juggle the longest?♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Q: My son's grades have started to slide. He has always done well in the past, so I don't understand what's going on. What should I do?

A: Start by talking to your son and to his teacher. Since he has done well until now, maybe he's used to school being easy for him. As the work gets more challenging, he may discover he has to work harder or in new ways. And lower grades can be discouraging and cause him to stop trying.

Also, make sure he's not worried about something like changes at home or a bully at school. Learning disabilities and vision problems are possibilities, too, so ask his teacher and his doctor about those.

Once you get to the root of the problem, you'll be able to work with your son and his teacher toward a solution.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Find the good

Recently, I overheard my daughter Rachel and a friend talking about classmates they find “annoying” or “gross.”

Later, I asked Rachel about this. She shrugged and said she doesn't have to be friends with everyone. I think she was surprised when I agreed with her. I told her I'm not friends with all of my coworkers, but I do try to get along with them.

I suggested that instead of gossiping about classmates, Rachel could find one thing she *does* like about each person. Maybe someone she wouldn't invite over to play happens to make a great reading buddy in class.

We've continued to talk about this, and I can see she's making an effort. In fact, it looks like she has a lot in common with her lab partner—a girl she used to think was annoying.♥

