

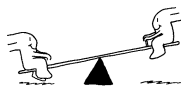
Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

September 2013

SHORT NOTES



Memory box

Help your child create a keepsake for this school year—it will remind him of all the good things he experiences! Have him decorate a cardboard box with his name, the year (“2013–14”), and the name of his school and teacher. Throughout the year, he can fill the box with graded assignments, photos, and artwork.

Helping the community

Here’s a simple way to teach your youngster to think of others. If you donate items to charity (say, summer clothes that your child has outgrown), take her along. You can explain what you’re doing and why. Then, ask her to look for more ways to help people.

Turn off the TV

Does your family have a habit of leaving the TV on in the evenings? Consider keeping it off most of the time and only turning it on for specific shows. This lets your youngster focus on homework and family time—plus it limits his exposure to news that could be upsetting.

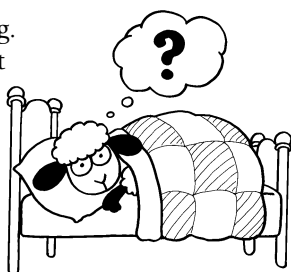
Worth quoting

“There is a brilliant child locked inside every student.” *Marva Collins*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: If people count sheep to fall asleep, what do sheep count?

A: Nothing. Sheep can’t count!



Off to a great start

As the school year begins, your child is probably getting used to new expectations and routines. You can help her succeed by providing the support she needs as she adjusts. Encourage her to start the year off right with these tips.



Have a positive attitude. Each morning before school, let your youngster tell you what she’s looking forward to that day. Perhaps there’s a book she’s eager to read or a new game she wants to play at recess. Having something to get excited about can help her head to school feeling great.

Be a hard worker. Your child should turn in assignments that she’s proud to see her name on. That means answering questions completely, double-checking her work, and using her best handwriting.

When she brings home an assignment that she’s especially pleased with, let her post it on the refrigerator.

Get into a routine. Having a daily schedule can help your child stay on track and do her best. Suggest that a younger child draw pictures of her day (eating breakfast, reading a book, getting ready for bed). An older one could write daily tasks—including homework time and extracurricular activities—into her student planner.♥

You can talk to me

Keep the lines of communication open as your child gets older. Consider these suggestions:

- Try to pay attention when your youngster tells you about little things, like a friend’s new pet. If you listen to what’s important to him, he’ll be more apt to come to you with bigger issues (say, if a classmate is teasing him).

- Find the best time to chat. Your child might be most talkative at bedtime or during dinner. Or if you carpool, listen as he chats with friends, and ask occasional questions. (“Who is on your soccer team this year?”)♥



Making friends

Children who have friends tend to enjoy school more and get higher grades. Share the following ideas with your youngster to help him build friendships.

Look approachable

Using friendly body language shows he's interested in getting to know other kids. Have him practice entering a room while smiling at you and making eye contact.

Use names

Suggest that your child say people's names during conversations. *Example:* "That's a good idea, Lance." This



creates a personal connection and shows that he cares about what the other person said.

Be kind

Sharing school supplies or toys can spark a new friendship between children. Or your youngster might offer to study with a student who is struggling. ("Come over after school, and we'll quiz each other on multiplication facts.")

Find shared interests

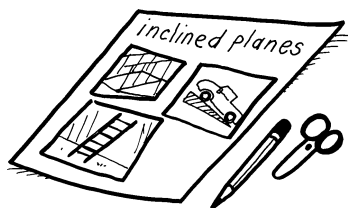
Have your child ask classmates about their activities and hobbies. ("Do you play a sport? I take tennis lessons.") *Tip:* Participating in an after-school activity is a good way to meet kids who like the same things he does.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Vocabulary art

Tap into your child's creative side while she studies her vocabulary words with these two projects.



1. Word collage. Ask your youngster to write a word at the top of a page. Then, let her cut out pictures from magazines that go with the word. For instance, if she's studying simple machines in science, she could find pictures of *levers* (seesaw, scissors) or *inclined planes* (wheelchair ramp, playground slide).

2. Rainbow words. Suggest that your child sort her words by writing them with different-colored pencils in the shape of a rainbow. Perhaps she could use a red pencil for nouns, a yellow one for verbs, and a blue one for adjectives.♥

"Dear teacher..."

Reaching out to your youngster's teacher sets a nice tone for the year. Here are ways you might introduce yourself and help her get to know your child:

- Write an email or a letter. Tell the teacher about your family, and describe your child's personality and interests. Also, explain how you'd like to be involved and any strengths and talents you might share.

- Do you and your youngster enjoy crafts, science experiments, or word games at home? His teacher would probably love to know about this! Let your child take pictures of the learning activities you do together and show them to the teacher. (He could email them or print them out to take to school.)♥



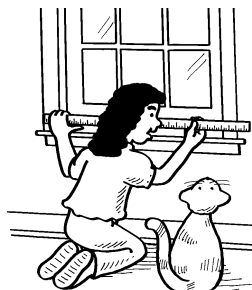
New learning standards

Q: I've heard that many states have new learning standards. What are these, and what can I do to help my daughter with them?

A: Schools in most states are starting to use the Common Core State Standards—guidelines created to prepare students for college or a career in today's world. Under the new standards, you might notice your youngster reading more nonfiction, writing more often, and explaining her thinking in math.

You can help your child at home by taking her to the library to check out nonfiction books. Ask her to show you interesting facts she finds and to share her opinions about stories. Also, encourage her to write for fun. She could review a movie, make up a recipe, or write instructions for backyard games.

Finally, look for practical ways she can use math (calculating a tip, measuring a window), and have her explain her thinking. *Example:* "How did you figure out that 28 inches is 2 feet, 4 inches?"♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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