

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2014

Westfield Washington School District



SHORT NOTES

Ready to go

Motivate your youngster to get ready for school on time by keeping a basket of activities (magazine, yo-yo, small puzzle) by your front door. Once he has his shoes and coat on, he can do an activity until it's time to head out. *Idea:* Swap items frequently to keep his interest.

Midyear progress report

When you review your child's report card, start by asking her how she feels about the different subjects. *Examples:* "Which subject was your favorite this quarter?" "Which one was hardest?" Then, talk about the grades she received. If one is lower than you expected, talk to her teacher—she can suggest ways your youngster could do better next quarter.

Speaking correctly

Does your child occasionally mispronounce words or make grammatical mistakes? Try to resist correcting him every time. But do give him the opportunity to hear the word pronounced or used correctly. For instance, if he says, "I saw geese at the park," you can say, "How many *geese* did you see?"

Worth quoting

"The road to success is always under construction." *Lily Tomlin*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do people do in clock factories?

A: They make faces all day.



Three ways to understand

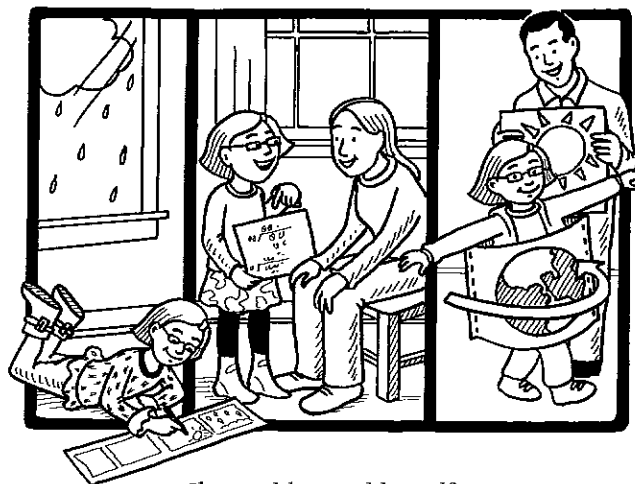
The more ways your child learns something, the easier it will be for her to understand it. Encourage her to explore information and ideas by seeing, hearing, and doing.

1. Seeing

Drawing pictures can help your youngster visualize concepts. Have her make a comic strip based on a nonfiction book. Each frame could show one step in the water cycle or in the process by which a bill becomes a law. She can even add dialogue bubbles. ("I'm a raindrop falling from a cloud.")

2. Hearing

Suggest that your youngster spell words or say addition or subtraction facts aloud. Also, ask her to talk about what she is learning. You might have her explain photosynthesis or long division to you or a sibling, for example. *Idea:*



She could record herself reciting material and play it back in the car.

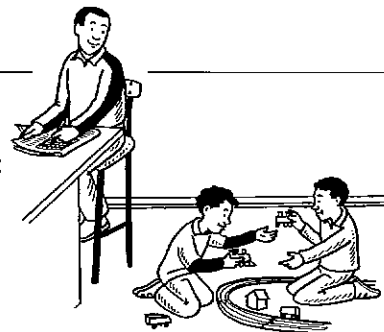
3. Doing

Hands-on experiences help your child understand ideas. If she's studying the solar system, pretend to be the sun, and have her be the earth. Tell her to spin her body (rotate) and walk in an orbit (revolve) around you. When she learns about pioneer times, she can do homework by candlelight or wash a shirt by hand—she'll have a better idea of what life was like before modern conveniences. ♥

Help siblings get along

If you have more than one youngster, you know that siblings don't always live in perfect harmony. Try these suggestions to limit conflict:

- Catch them at good moments. Point out something specific they're doing so they can repeat it. *Example:* "I love how nicely you've been talking to each other all morning!"
- Give your children a chance to solve their own disagreements. Rather than stepping in as soon as they start squabbling, you might simply stay nearby in case things get out of hand.
- If your youngsters need your help to fix a problem, try offering choices. *Example:* "Do you want to share the trains, or would you rather divide them up?" ♥



Game-time lessons

Board games aren't only fun—they're also a great way to build character. Here are values your youngster can learn when you play games together.

Patience. Waiting for his turn lets your child practice being patient. Gently remind him to avoid rushing other players. You might suggest that he pass the time by planning his next move or organizing his cards. And point out that he'll get to take his time when it's his turn.

Honesty. Talk to your youngster about the importance of being an honest player. If you make a mistake (say, you



accidentally give yourself too many points), let him hear you correct yourself. Or if the spinner lands on the line between two numbers, ask him to spin again rather than picking the better move.

Sportsmanship.

Emphasize having fun rather than winning.

For instance, cheer each other on. ("Yes! You got the card you needed.") When you end up with an unlucky move, say something like "Oops" rather than getting angry. Also, make it a family ritual to high-five the winner. If you lose, set an example by announcing, "That was a good game!"♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

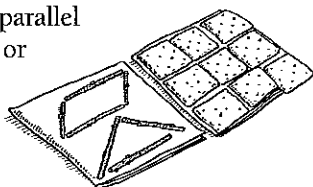


Snack on math

Turn your child's snack into a geometry lesson with these activities.

Shapes and lines

Your youngster can make shapes out of pretzel sticks, baby carrots, or string cheese. Challenge her to create a triangle, rhombus, or hexagon, for instance. Then, she gets to eat the shape! Or have her use the snacks to form lines that are parallel (side by side) or perpendicular (forming an L or a T, for example).



Area

Let your child explore area with crackers and a napkin. (Note: Area measures the surface of a flat shape in square units.) Ask her to lay square crackers in one layer on a napkin and count them—the number of crackers (square units) is the area. Or she could multiply the crackers in one row (3) by the crackers in one column (3) to get the area: $3 \times 3 = 9$ crackers.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Online safety

I have always been careful about making sure my son Logan is safe online. He has a screen name that doesn't reveal his identity, and I use parental safety controls on our computer.

Then one day, Logan started a word game online with a random opponent. He showed me a message that he had received from the other player. Although the message itself seemed harmless, I realized that the game was allowing him to chat with strangers.

I explained to Logan that chatting online was like talking to a stranger in real life, and I made a rule that he can play only with people he knows. We thought of a few friends and relatives he might invite to play, and he and I have even started a game. He's safer—and we've discovered a new way for him to stay in touch with relatives who live out of town.♥



Q & A Goal of the month

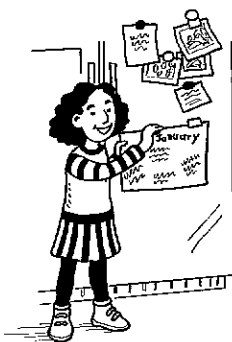
Q: I like the idea of making New Year's resolutions, but we rarely stick with them. Any ideas?

A: A year might seem like a long time to keep a resolution. Consider making one per month—you'll teach your child to set reasonable goals and to work to achieve them.

To start, let your youngster write "January" in big letters at the top of a piece of paper. Post it on the refrigerator, and have each

family member write a resolution for the month. Your child might resolve to finish class work on time or get a better grade on her next geography quiz. Perhaps you'll decide to take on a new responsibility at work or join a walking group at the mall.

Together, discuss ways to reach your goals that month, and talk frequently about your progress. On the last day of January, you can start a sheet for February. Then, rewrite resolutions you're still working on, or add new ones.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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