

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

September 2021



SHORT NOTES

Join in, parents!

Want to show your youngster that his school is important to you, connect with other parents, and have a stronger voice in your child's education? Consider joining the PTA or PTO. You can participate in meetings, help with fundraisers, and volunteer in other ways. However much (or little) time you're able to devote, your membership matters.

Attendance: Job #1

Attending school regularly is critical to your youngster's success. Schedule family trips around the school calendar, and try to book doctor appointments outside of class hours. Also, have a backup plan in case she misses the bus or a carpool driver cancels.

Touch base with teachers

Set an upbeat tone for the new year by introducing yourself to your child's teachers. Attend open house, or send friendly emails. Let them know you're excited to partner with them! Share details they might not know about your youngster, too, perhaps that he speaks another language at home or that his favorite hobby is skateboarding.

Worth quoting

"Don't stop now. Go ahead! Be readers all of your lives. And don't forget, librarians and teachers can help you find the right books to read." *Beverly Cleary*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: What has teeth but no mouth?

A: A comb.

Back to school—and back on track

Your youngster has a lot of learning ahead of her this year! And after last year's disruptions, she'll need your support more than ever. Luckily, there are ways to help her at home that will fit seamlessly into your daily routine.



Create learning opportunities

Let your child post her sight words or multiplication facts on sticky notes around the house. She can read them as she's washing her hands or waiting for the microwave to beep. As she picks up toys, challenge her to sort them by color, size, or shape. When she folds laundry or sets the table, see if she can fold towels, sheets, and napkins into halves, thirds, or fourths.

Involve the whole family

Start a shared story that everyone can add to. ("The first alien to visit Earth brought a purple polka-dotted pet.") When you finish your story, read it together. Also, weave learning into

family games. Use your child's vocabulary words in charades or Pictionary. Play "Math Hangman" with blanks for digits in a big number instead of letters in a word.

Address problems early

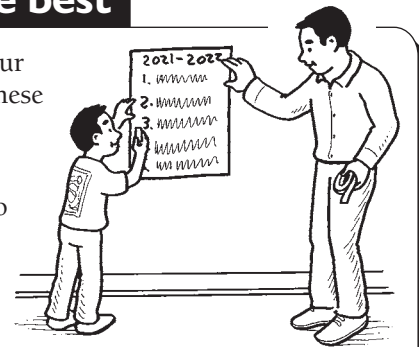
It's important for your youngster to know she can say, "I don't understand." For instance, not quite "getting" place value will make it harder to solve bigger math problems. Explain that teachers like to hear questions. *Tip:* Reach out to your child's teachers if she's struggling with anything. They can suggest ways to help.♥

To get the best, expect the best

When you set positive expectations for your child, you motivate him to do his best. Use these tips to aim high.

● **Be specific.** Instead of "I expect you to do well in school," you might try, "I expect you to finish all your homework on time." *Idea:* What does your youngster expect of himself? Encourage him to make a poster of his own expectations and hang it up for inspiration.

● **Be realistic.** Setting targets that are too high can discourage your child. Too low, and he might not achieve what he's capable of. For example, you might expect him to bring up marks from his last report card by one grade rather than expecting all As.♥



Stress relief: A tool kit for kids

Children’s mental health is a topic that’s been on many parents’ minds this past year. Whether your youngster is going through a difficult time or just experiencing everyday stress, these kid-friendly strategies can help him cope.

Soothing. Encourage your child to think about activities that make him feel relaxed or happy. That might be coloring, playing a guitar, or kicking a soccer ball around. He can do one when he’s feeling anxious or down—even a few minutes may help.



Deep breathing. Have your youngster pretend he’s holding a flower in one hand and a candle in the other. He should close his eyes, breathe in slowly through his nose to sniff the “flower,” then breathe out slowly through his mouth to blow out the “candle.”

Stretching. Suggest that your child imagine he’s a cat waking up from a wonderful nap. He can take a big yawn, raise his arms, and stretch toward the sky.

Note: Some youngsters need professional help to handle their feelings. If you’re concerned about your child, talk to his pediatrician or the school counselor.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

At-home “library time”

My children, Talia and Diego, read for at least 20 minutes every night as part of their homework. I wasn’t making time in my schedule to read much myself, so I decided to read alongside them. That’s how our family “library time” was born.

I join the kids in the living room after dinner. We all read silently, then talk about our books. Sometimes, one of us will come across a funny or interesting part that we just can’t wait to share, and we’ll all pause to listen.



Now we’re adding a new twist to library time. After our silent reading, I read a chapter aloud from a book, and the kids relax and listen.

Talia and Diego love that I’m joining them for reading time. Often, we go way over 20 minutes without realizing it, which is just fine with me!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

One-minute learning activities

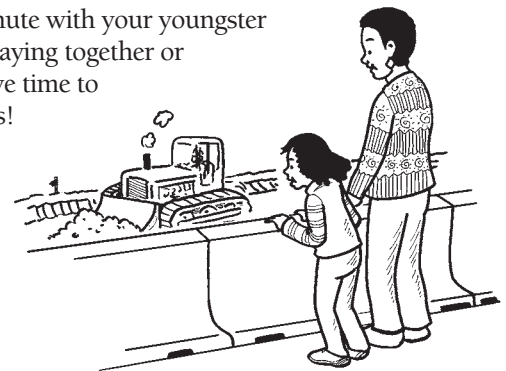
Have a free minute with your youngster in the car or in a waiting room? While playing together or walking through the park? Then you have time to share a little learning with these fun ideas!

“Buzz” counting: Encourage your child to practice skip counting and mental math. She can count by twos or threes, swapping the word “buzz” for every fourth number (2, 4, 6, buzz, 10, 12, 14, buzz).

Word walk: Can your youngster spot a noun (a *bulldozer*), an adjective (a *green sign*), and a verb (a *teenager jogging*)?

Rhythm riddler: Clap your hands in a rhythm (clap, clap-clap-clap, clap-clap), and let your child clap the rhythm back to you.

Treasure hunt: Hide a small object. Give your youngster directions to find it. (“Turn right and walk four steps. Bend down at a 90-degree angle.”)♥



Q & A A key to kindness

Q: *I’m often reminding my children to “be nice.” How can I help them become kinder people?*

A: One key to nurturing kindness is teaching your children to imagine how they’d feel in someone else’s shoes. That’s not always easy! So try talking your kids through the process instead of just reminding them to be nice: “How would you feel if someone put you down for striking out?”

Then, ask them to think about what would make them feel better, like a teammate saying, “Don’t worry. Everyone strikes out sometimes.”

With this gentle coaching, your children will get in the habit of thinking about others’ feelings—and ways to brighten their days. The more your kids do this, the more natural it will become.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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