

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION[®]

April 2016



SHORT NOTES

Solve the mystery

When your youngster reads a mystery, encourage her to pretend she's the detective. Can she solve the case before the book ends? Suggest that she jot down clues as she goes and try to predict the solution. She'll practice comprehension skills that will make her a better reader—and she'll enjoy the story more.

Treasure traditions

Every family has traditions, even if you don't realize that's what they are. Talk about activities you do regularly, such as eating a special brunch on birthdays or taking a walk on the first day of spring. Then, tell your child about traditions you remember from childhood. Your youngster may discover one he wants to try.

DID YOU KNOW?

About 10 percent of 12-year-olds say they've had alcohol at least once—a percentage that increases sharply in older kids. Help prevent your child from sampling alcohol now by making sure she knows it's illegal and may make her sick. Also tell her that people who start drinking before age 15 are more likely to develop alcohol problems than those who wait.

Worth quoting

"I would like to paint the way a bird sings." *Claude Monet*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: How many peaches grow on a tree?

A: All of them.



Build background knowledge

Everyday activities, conversations, and outings have something in common: They can boost your youngster's *background knowledge*. This collection of information will help him to understand and analyze material in school. Consider these tips.

Experiences

Give your child opportunities to touch and handle new things. For instance, if you use a garlic press or a Phillips screwdriver, tell him what it's called, and teach him how to use it. Show him how you check the oil in your car or sew a button on a shirt, and let him try. He'll learn how things work and gain new vocabulary.

Conversations

When you have company, invite your youngster to participate in the grown-ups' discussions sometimes. He will learn about the world by listening to adults talk about current events, their jobs, or their daily lives. And if your guests are from a different cultural



background, he may also pick up information about their language or customs.

Field trips

A visit to the post office, the grocery store, or even a dentist's office can turn into a field trip. Before you go, help your child list questions he might ask or find answers to. *Examples:* "What's the newest stamp you have?" or "What does an eggplant look like?" Also seek out new or unusual places to visit, like a yarn store, garden center, or tack shop. ♥

How to prepare for IEP meetings

If your child has an IEP (Individualized Education Program), here is advice for the next meeting you attend to review and update her plan:

- You're an important part of the IEP team, so plan to share information and ideas. Write up a summary of your youngster's strengths and needs. Also, list questions you have, such as "How many students will be in her small group?" or "How will you help her calm down if she's upset?"
- If possible, take a spouse, relative, or friend with you. There may be a lot of people around the table, so having a support person could make you feel more confident.
- Have a positive attitude. Remember that every member of the team has the same goal: to help your child do her best. ♥



Bullying: Know the facts

Teaching your child about bullying can help her handle it better if she sees it and also make her less likely to bully others. Share these facts.

Verbal bullying is more common.

Teasing and threatening happen more often than physical bullying like hitting or shoving. If your child is bullied verbally or physically, she should tell a grown-up right away.



Bystanders make a difference. Studies show that more than half of bullying incidents stop when a bystander steps in. Have your youngster think of things she could say if a classmate is being bullied. ("Want to play with me?" "Let's go sit over there.")

Excluding others can be bullying, too.

When a child urges other kids not to be friends with someone, that's bullying. Encourage your youngster to be kind to everyone and not to exclude others. She might say something like, "I decide who I'm friends with." ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

A family history quilt

Youngsters love hearing about relatives' childhoods. Making this "quilt" together can teach your child about his family's past.

1. Give each person an 8" x 8" square of poster board. Your youngster could mail squares to out-of-town relatives.

2. Ask everyone to draw a favorite childhood memory on one side. *Examples:* cooking with Grandma, a trip to the state fair. On the other side, they should



write about the memories. ("While Grandma and I made chicken parmigiana, she would tell me about growing up in her little village in Italy.")

3. Help your child arrange the squares into a quilt and connect them with clear tape.

4. Use the quilt to enjoy your family's history. You might take turns picking a square and talking about the memory, or make a family time line based on the squares. ♥

Q & A

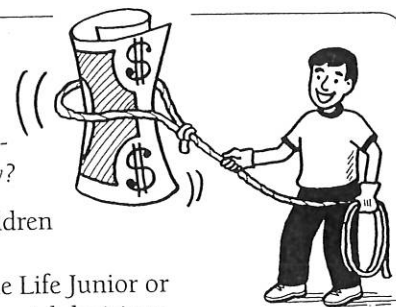
Money managers

Q: We can't afford to give our son an allowance. How else can we help him manage money and get off on the right foot financially?

A: Games and books are ideal for teaching children to make decisions about money.

Choose board games that involve money like Life Junior or Payday. When it's your turn, talk about the financial decisions you make. ("I'm going to save money instead of borrowing more because I don't want to pay interest.")

Also, read stories with financial literacy themes and nonfiction books on the topic. Ask a librarian for suggestions, or try books like *Sam and the Lucky Money* (Karen Chinn) or *The Everything Kids' Money Book* (Brette McWhorter Sember). Encourage your youngster to retell the stories or "teach you" the information. He'll show what he learned about how to spend wisely or pay bills. ♥



Learn to take initiative

Do you want your child to do chores or fill out her reading log without being asked? Teachers and employers value initiative, too. Here are ways to help your youngster become a self-starter.

Write a list

Making her own list can inspire your child to take initiative. Suggest she check off each item as she completes it—she'll see how good it feels to accomplish everything on her list.

Ask questions

Rather than telling your youngster what to do, ask about what she should

do. You could say, "Do you have everything you need for school?" instead of "Don't forget your backpack." Try this regularly, and you may find her asking herself the same questions!

Recognize progress

When your child takes out the trash or starts homework without a reminder, point out that she's showing initiative. Tell her how helpful it is that you didn't need to prompt her, and she will be more likely to repeat the behavior in the future. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5621