

Home & School

CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

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Buena Vista Elementary School
Terri Pfister, School Counselor



SHORT NOTES

New kid

Does your youngster's class have a new student? Your child can make him feel welcome by playing with him at recess or sitting together at lunch. If your youngster is the new kid, suggest that he get involved right away. Activities like scouts, band, and chess club can help him make friends.

Number patterns

Build your child's math skills by giving her number patterns to solve. Start simple (2, 4, 6, 8, ?). She should notice that you add 2 each time, so the next number is 10. To make the patterns harder, combine addition and subtraction. *Example:* 2, 7, 6, 11, 10 (the pattern is + 5, - 1). Let her make up patterns for you, too!

Apologies in action

Remind your youngster that it's polite to say "I'm sorry" when he makes a mistake. And it's even better to follow up his apology with an action. If he breaks his sister's toy, he can say, "I'm sorry. I'll try to fix it now."

Worth quoting

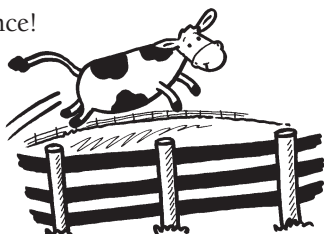
"Education is not the filling of a pail, but the lighting of a fire."

William Butler Yeats

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What runs around a cow pasture but never moves?

A: A fence!



Unlocking nonfiction

From books and magazines to textbooks and newspapers, nonfiction reading is a big part of your child's life. Help her get the most out of her reading with these ideas.

Surround. Leave newspapers, coffee table books, magazines, and how-to books around the house. Ask questions to encourage your youngster to read them ("Did you see the story about the county fair?"). At bedtime, choose nonfiction read-alouds, such as *Insectlopedia* by Douglas Florian. Before you read, say, "Let's see what we can learn about bugs." When you finish, mention something you discovered ("A praying mantis eats bees!"), and ask your child to share a new fact.

Connect. Your youngster can soak up facts more easily by linking them with what she sees. If she's reading about magnets, ask her to explain how your refrigerator magnets work ("Magnets are attracted to iron or nickel, so the refrigerator must contain one of those metals").



If you're visiting out-of-town relatives, take along a guide about the area you're going to.

Expand. Reading the same information in several nonfiction sources can help your child understand a topic better. For a history chapter on ancient civilizations, she might visit the library to check out *Mummies, Pyramids, and Pharaohs* by Gail Gibbons or *Adventures in Ancient Greece* by Linda Bailey. Ask her what information appears in both her textbook and the library books. Encourage her to share new facts with her teacher or class.♥

Show your love

It's important to tell your youngster you love him—and it's also nice to show him. Here are a few good ways:

♥ Set aside time for just the two of you on a weekend. Play board games or visit a park.

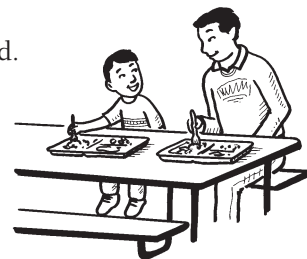
♥ Surprise your child by joining him for lunch at school.

♥ Let him stay up late for a family walk around the block. Warm up afterward with hot cocoa.

♥ Learn to say "I love you" in several languages.

Use a bilingual dictionary or an online translator like www.wordreference.com.

♥ Make your youngster's favorite meal. Or use cookie cutters to shape his pancake or sandwich into a heart.♥



Positive thinking

Look on the bright side! Help your child have an optimistic outlook in life, and he'll do better at bouncing back when things don't go his way. Encourage positive thinking with these ideas.

Set an example

Your youngster will follow your lead when he hears you making the best of a situation. For instance, if you're stuck in traffic, suggest singing songs or playing a word game together. During tough times, find something positive to say ("I know money has been tight, but it has helped us realize what is really important").



Find the silver lining

Teach your child that good things happen even on bad days. When he complains about an argument with a friend or an art project he didn't like, listen to his feelings. Then, help him think of something that made him happy ("I got an A on my spelling quiz").

Imagine the outcome

If your youngster is worried, ask him to think of the worst-case scenario ("If I mess up during my report, everyone will laugh"). Then, have him picture what's more likely to happen ("Some people might laugh, but my friends would be nice"). If your youngster thinks realistically about the situation, he will be less apt to worry.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Honoring presidents

Two famous presidents, George Washington and Abraham Lincoln, were born in February. Your child can celebrate their birthdays with two presidential projects.

Make a monument. Many monuments have been built to honor presidents. Ask your youngster to design her own for a president she has studied. *Examples:* a giant pen for Thomas Jefferson, author of the Declaration of Independence; a rocket ship for John F. Kennedy, who set a goal to go to the moon.



Create a display. Have your child choose a president and think of items to represent his life. For Lincoln, she could include a top hat and a log cabin (built from pretzel rods and peanut butter). For Washington, she might cut out a star for the one he wore as a general and draw the flag of his home state of Virginia.♥

Q & A

Class assignments

Q: Lately my daughter hasn't been finishing assignments in class, and she has to complete them for homework. What should I do?

A: Talk to your youngster's teacher to find out what may be getting in her way. If she is performing on grade level, she may just need to work more efficiently.

Remind her that it's okay to give her eyes a break occasionally by looking around the room. But she shouldn't let herself get distracted. For example, if she has 10 math problems, she might keep her eyes on the paper until she has finished 5 of them.

Finally, if your daughter does bring classwork home, have her complete it before she visits friends or plays. She'll be more motivated to finish in class if she knows it will cut into her free time at home.♥

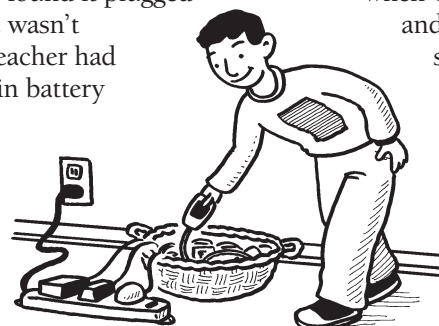


PARENT TO PARENT

Our unplugged household

My son's class has been learning about ways to protect the environment. One day while I was looking for my cell phone charger, Bradley found it plugged in, although my phone wasn't attached. He said his teacher had told him that plugged-in battery chargers use power even when they're not charging anything. That gave him an idea: our family could use less electricity.

So Bradley collected all of our chargers (cell phone, video camera, MP3 player) and put them in a basket next to a power strip. He asked us to unplug chargers when we're not using them and to turn the power strip off if nothing is charging. We're not wasting as much electricity now—and Bradley's already thinking of ways we can save water!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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