

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2018



Merkel Elementary School
Mrs. Nall, Principal

SHORT NOTES

What's the source?

Share these ideas for keeping track of sources when your youngster writes reports for school. He can jot each fact on the front of an index card and list the book's title and author on the back. Or he could print out articles and highlight information he plans to use. The URL will be right there at the bottom of the page.

Winter wear

Not too cold, not too hot—your child will concentrate better in school if she's comfortable. Encourage her to dress in layers so she can remove or add as needed. For example, she might wear a sweater over a T-shirt or a vest on top of a blouse.

Developing diligence

When your youngster gives a job his wholehearted effort, he's being *diligent*. To demonstrate, suggest that he fold a few shirts before putting them in a drawer and then just throw in the rest. Ask him if he has done the job right. Point out that diligence will give him better results (unwrinkled shirts).

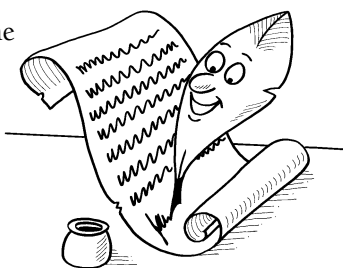
Worth quoting

"Hold on to a true friend with both your hands." *Nigerian proverb*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Where was the Declaration of Independence signed?

A: At the bottom.



Together time

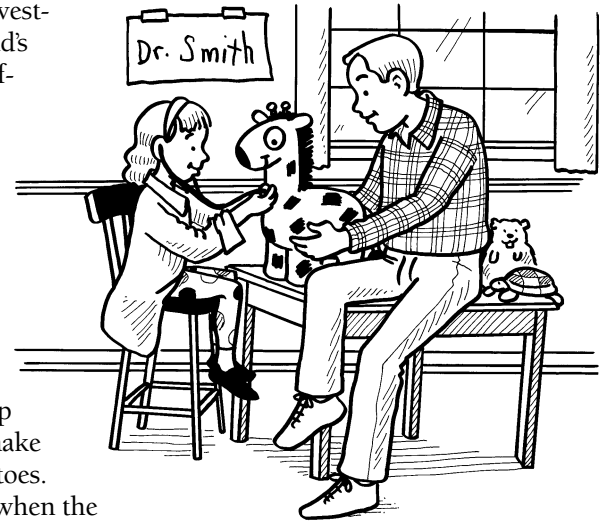
Family time is a worthy investment that can boost your child's communication skills and self-esteem. As a result, she may learn more and behave better in school. Try these ideas for fitting in more time with your youngster.

Maximize minutes

Sharing simple, everyday moments may lead to conversations about school or friends. Ask your child to help you with dinner. She could make the salad while you peel potatoes. Or sing along with the radio when the two of you are in the car or listening to music at home.

Have "play dates"

Join your youngster when she plays. She might teach you the rules for Trouble or Mousetrap, or you could show her a card game you liked at her age. Or pretend with her—maybe she'll be a veterinarian and you'll bring stuffed animals for checkups. Taking turns and role-playing build social skills she needs in school.



Plan ahead

With your child, list special activities you both enjoy, such as going to a flea market, visiting a nature center, or watching a basketball game. Put these on a calendar so you'll plan on them. She'll see that her company is important to you.

Tip: Silence or put away your phone to give your youngster your undivided attention while you chat or play.♥

Celebrate history

For a child, even yesterday can seem like a long time ago. Bring the past into the present for your youngster with these do-it-today activities.

● Celebrate Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

This civil rights leader helped to change the world.

How can your family make a difference? Have each person draw a star on a sheet of paper, then cut it out and write one way to help others on each of the star's points. *Examples:* "Make a meal for a sick neighbor." "Play with a classmate who doesn't have a lot of friends."

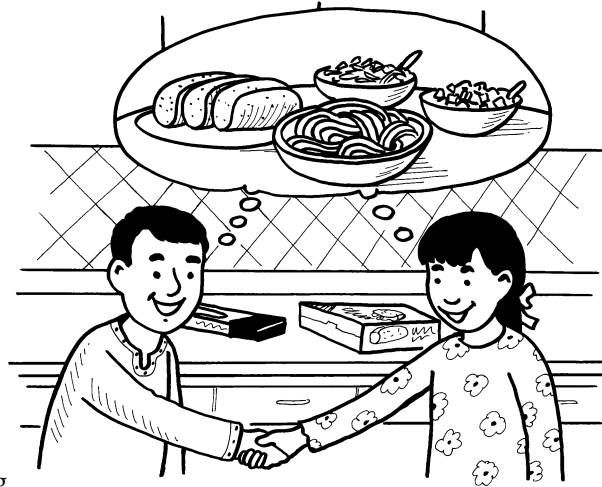
● **Create a personal history museum.** History isn't just about others—your family has its own history, too! Let your child turn a box into a museum filled with items that remind family members of "historic" moments. He might include his T-ball award or a photograph of his little sister in a school play.♥



Keys to collaboration

Here's a skill that will come in handy when your child works with partners or groups: collaboration. He'll need to exchange opinions and solve problems throughout his school career and in future jobs. Share these tips.

Think before answering. In a good discussion, each person builds on others' responses. Practice by asking



one family member wants tacos for dinner and another wants pasta. Perhaps he'll suggest a "taco-spaghetti bar" where you have tortillas *and* noodles, with toppings for both.♥

a "Would you rather" question, such as "Would you rather fly like a bird or transport anywhere instantly?" Maybe you'll say "teleporting" is better because you'd get home from work quickly. Your youngster might reply, "I agree that teleporting would be faster, but I'd like to fly and look at the world below."

Negotiate thoughtfully. Appoint your child "consensus builder" for one week. His job is to think of compromises. Say

PARENT TO PARENT

Peer pressure: Stop and think

My daughter Chloe has a friend who dares her to do things that could lead to trouble. When the girls got a restroom pass from their teacher, this friend pressured her to sneak onto the playground. Chloe said it was hard to say no, and when she did, her friend called her a "scaredy-cat."

I told Chloe I was proud of her for doing the right thing. Then I shared an idea to use if she faces peer pressure. She can picture a



stop sign in her mind—that's her cue to *stop and think*. If she wouldn't want her teacher or me to see her saying yes, she should say no.

We also talked about how true friends will take "no" for an answer. I hope the "stop sign" strategy will help her handle tough situations in the future.♥



Q & A

Encourage active play

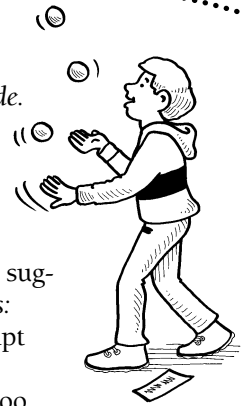
Q: My son used to get plenty of exercise by playing outside. Now that he's older, he spends more time sitting around than running around. How can I get him moving?

A: You're right to want your son to move more, since daily physical activity will keep him healthier.

Challenge your child to think of fun ways to be active, and suggest that he write each one on a separate index card. *Examples:* "Jump rope." "Juggle balls." "Play air guitar." Every day, prompt him to pick a few cards and do what they say.

Encourage him to enjoy physical activity with other kids, too, by joining a sports team or taking a class like karate or gymnastics. You can also help by being active *with* him. Go outside for a game of catch, follow along with a workout video, or play Ping-Pong at the community center.

Between these ideas—and recess and PE at school—your son can get the recommended hour or more of exercise per day.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a crystal "garden"

This sparkly science experiment will show your youngster how crystals form.

1. Save the shells from 4 eggs that you've cracked in half. Have your child rinse them and place into an empty egg carton.

2. Measure $\frac{1}{2}$ cup boiling water into a mug. Your youngster should stir in about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt, a little at a time, until it won't dissolve anymore.

3. Let your child pour 1 tbsp. water into each shell and add a drop of food coloring.

4. Have her check the shells twice a day and record what she sees. Over several days, colorful crystals will form.

5. She could paint her crystals with clear nail polish to preserve them.

The science: As salt dissolves, the water molecules drive apart the salt molecules. When the water evaporates, the salt molecules go back together,

forming a regular geometric pattern called a *crystal*. Snowflakes and diamonds are real-world examples of crystals.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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