

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

April 2004

SHORT NOTES



Mistake makeup

We all make mistakes—the key is how we handle them. If your child does something that upsets another person, help her come up with a way to make up for it. *Example:* She speaks rudely to her dad. Suggest that she write him a short apology note.

Reading on the go

Encourage your youngster to take a book along on errands. He can read in the car, in waiting rooms, etc. Using pockets of time for reading is a great habit to develop, and it makes time pass more quickly.

Product safety

Have a question about the safety of a toy or other product? You can call the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission hotline at 800-638-CPSC. Or visit its Web site at www.cpsc.gov for lists of recalls and alerts.

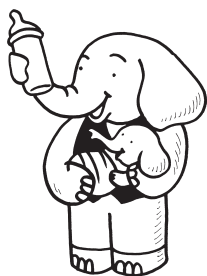
Worth quoting

“There is always one moment in childhood when the door opens and lets the future in.” *Graham Greene*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do elephants have that no other animal has?

A: Baby elephants.



Sailing the “citizen-ship”

Your child is a member of many communities. For instance, he is part of a family, neighborhood, town, and school. Being a good citizen of these communities is a valuable skill. Here are four ways to teach your youngster about citizenship—and build confidence and caring for others.

Following rules.

Every community has rules. From stopping at traffic lights to raising a hand before speaking in class, your child comes across them every day. Have him think about why rules are important. What would happen if communities didn't have rules? Whose job is it to enforce them?

Understanding symbols. The flag and bald eagle symbolize U.S. citizenship. Mascots often are chosen to stand for a school. People use symbols to show pride in their communities. Ask your youngster to come up with a symbol for your family. She may want to design a flag or pick an animal as a family mascot.

Staying involved. Voting is an important part of citizenship. To help your youngster learn more about the process, take him with you to the polls. You can also read news stories about candidates for office. Another great way to get him involved is to have him write a letter voicing his opinion to a local or state politician.

Reaching out. Challenge your child to find ways to help others. *Examples:* writing letters to a soldier, donating outgrown clothes,



doing chores for a sick family member. Whether the projects are large or small, she'll touch another person's life. ♥

Family quiet hour

Getting kids to sit down and do homework can be tough. Having a set family time just might make the process easier. Try these ideas:

- Designate an hour a day as “family quiet hour.” A good choice for many families is just after dinner.
- Vow to keep the television turned off during that hour.
- Encourage friends and family to call at other times.
- Let children do homework, study, or read.
- Adults can consider paying bills, doing paperwork, or reading. ♥



Attention boosters

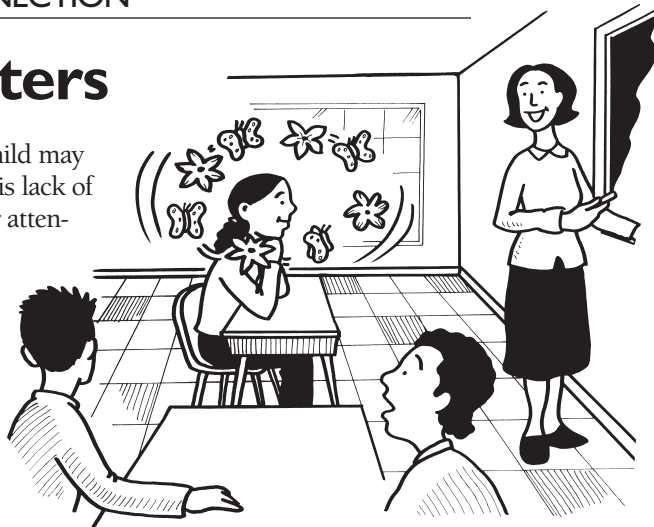
When the weather warms up, your child may catch spring fever. A common symptom is lack of focus in school. One cure is to boost her attention in class. Share the tips below.

Daydreams

Everyone's mind wanders sometimes. Challenge your child to come up with a phrase she can repeat when she realizes she's daydreaming. *Examples:* "Class time is teacher time." "Thoughts toward the board."

Distractions

When a classmate coughs or drops a book, suggest that your youngster try to ignore it by



keeping his eyes on the teacher. With practice, it will become easier for your child to avoid interruptions.

Details

Kids often tune out when they don't understand a concept. When your child is bogged down with a lesson, encourage her to raise her hand. Asking the teacher to explain confusing points can keep her on track.

Discomforts

Sitting frozen in a chair is tiring and uncomfortable. Remind your youngster to shift positions every few minutes to get his blood flowing and keep him alert. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Alternatives to "no"

I used to say no to my son all the time. "No, you can't ride your bike in the rain." "No, you can't stay up late to watch TV."



I realized there had to be a better way to respond to Jamie's requests. Now, I find ways to say yes whenever possible. "Yes, you can ride your bike as soon as it stops raining."

When I have to refuse a request, I look for a way to phrase it without using no. "You have a set bedtime on school nights."

I also try to explain the reasons behind my decisions. "You had trouble getting up this morning. You need to go to bed on time tonight."

Jamie doesn't always like my decisions, but he seems to accept them a little more easily. ♥

Q & A

E-mail etiquette

Q: My daughter has begun e-mailing family members and a few friends. What should I teach her about using e-mail correctly?

A: Start with a safety tip. Explain to your youngster that she should never respond to e-mail from a stranger. If she receives e-mail from an unknown address, have her tell you right away. You may want to sit with her at first so you can screen the new messages. You can also hang a list of family and friends' e-mail addresses by the computer.

When your daughter is writing e-mail, let her know she should use both capital and lowercase letters. Using all capitals makes e-mail difficult to read. Also, encourage her to write a clear, brief description in the subject line of the e-mail. That way, the receiver knows what the message is about. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Math in the cards

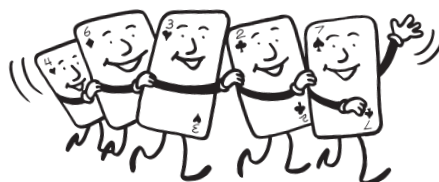
A deck of playing cards can give your child hours of math practice. Try these two games.

Materials: playing cards from ace through nine, paper, pencil

1. Give each player four cards. Using any combination of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division,

see how many equations they can write in five minutes based on their cards (the ace card equals 1). Award one point for each equation with the correct answer. *Example:* Your child is given 4, 6, 3, and 7. Possible equations include $4 + 6 + 3 + 7 = 20$ and $(4 \times 6) + (7 \times 3) = 45$.

2. Deal five cards to each player. Challenge them to form the two largest numbers possible using all five cards. *Example:* Your child draws 7, 1, 5, 8, and 2. He writes 87,521 and 87,512. *Idea:* Have players form the smallest number possible. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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