

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

February 2004

SHORT NOTES



Figure it out

Try this when your child comes to an unfamiliar word while reading. First, have her sound out the syllables. Next, suggest she read the entire sentence again. Then, ask her to think of a word that would make sense in place of the unfamiliar one.

DID YOU KNOW?

Staying actively involved in your youngster's education brings positive rewards. A recent study showed that parent involvement leads to higher achievement, fewer absences, and better behavior. Plus, being involved keeps you in touch with what's happening in your child's school.

Source: Institute for Responsive Education

Try, try again

Here's an activity to help redirect your child when he misbehaves. Tell him to pretend to jump into a time machine. *Example:* Your youngster says a rude word. He uses the time machine to go back and rephrase his thoughts. Then, he can try again to use appropriate language.

Worth quoting

"Give a little love to a child, and you get a great deal back." *Ruskin*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What stays in the corner but travels the world?

A: A postage stamp.



Making mealtime family time

Finding time to spend together as a family can be tough. Sharing meals is one way to build your family bond. Consider these ideas from other parents to make mealtimes special.

Upbeat conversations

"My family decided that dinnertime was not the time to discuss problems or difficult issues. We save those for family meetings or one-on-one conversations. Instead, we focus on positive topics and good things that happened during the day. Everyone looks forward to an enjoyable dinner together."

Saturday brunch

"My kids like to sleep late on Saturdays, so we eat a mid-morning breakfast as a family. We all take turns cooking. My first-grader likes making oatmeal, and my fifth-grader is a pancake whiz. It's a great way to connect at the beginning of the weekend."

Super supper selections

"Before I shop for groceries, I ask my family for input about the week's meals."



I keep a dry-erase board on the fridge and write down each day's dinner menu. It helps me stay organized. And everybody knows when we're having the meals they requested."

Unique locations

"My children love eating meals in unusual places. We've eaten a picnic on the living room floor. We've sat cross-legged around the coffee table and pretended we were in a Japanese restaurant. Once, we even ate inside a tent my son made using chairs and blankets. We'll all remember these special times." ♥

Evening update

Spending a few minutes with you every evening can send your youngster the message that school is important. Here are two ways to support your child's learning:

■ Ask your child to go through her backpack each day and pick one item to show the family. *Examples:* an essay, a spelling test. Have her explain why she chose it. Then, display her selection on the refrigerator.

■ Encourage your youngster to share what he learns. One way is to look through his textbooks and ask him about his homework. You'll get an idea of the concepts covered in class. ♥



“I remember!”

Tips for improving memory

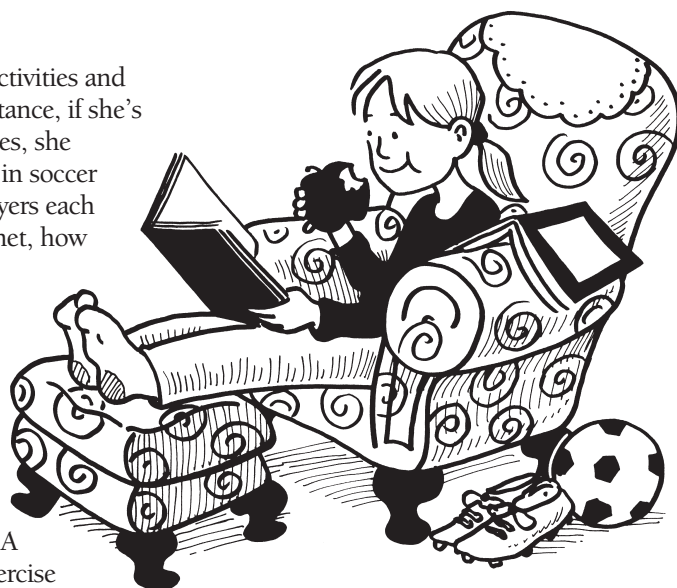
Remembering information is a key study skill. Share the “AIR” approach with your youngster to improve his short- and long-term memory.

Attention. Distractions, such as TV and talking, can make it difficult for youngsters to concentrate. A calm, quiet spot is best for studying. If your child’s mind wanders as he’s working, encourage him to take a short break. He needs to focus on the material to retain it.

Interest. When your child is interested in a topic, she is more likely to remember it—and for a longer time. Suggest

that she tie her studies to activities and hobbies she enjoys. For instance, if she’s learning multiplication tables, she could phrase the problems in soccer terms. *Example:* “If two players each kicked three balls into the net, how many goals were scored?”

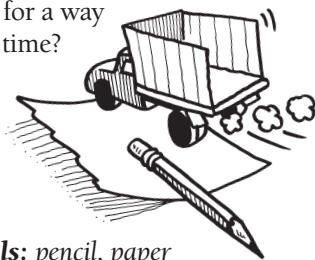
Rest. It’s nearly impossible for youngsters to remember information when they’re tired or fatigued. Help your child choose a time of day when he feels alert to learn new material. A healthy snack and some exercise can give him a boost. ♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Sentence sense

Looking for a way to pass the time? Try this language activity with your youngsters.



Materials: pencil, paper

Give your children a time limit, and ask them to collect as many words as possible. The only rule is that the words have to come from the world around them. They can use all five of their senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, taste) to find the words. Have them write their words on paper.

When time is up, challenge them to write as many sentences as possible using their words. Ask them to underline the words from their lists. *Examples:* The truck’s engine rumbled as it went by my window. The toddler’s face turned bright red as he cried loudly. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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PARENT TO PARENT

Listening to lyrics

Our children love listening to music. Stephen especially enjoys his older brother’s music, and lately they both have begun spending all their chore money on CDs.

My wife and I are worried about the lyrics of some of today’s popular music. We don’t want our children listening to negative or inappropriate messages. We told the kids about our concerns and set a few ground rules. They can’t buy CDs with parental advisory labels. (Record companies voluntarily place them on CDs that contain explicit lyrics.) And when our children buy a CD, my wife and I listen to it with them.

As it turns out, talking about the music has given us a chance to share our values with our kids. We’ve already discussed drugs, racism, and violence. ♥



Q & A Too many activities

Q: My daughter has a busy schedule at this time of the year with school and activities. She’s having trouble falling asleep at night, and I’m worried that she’s feeling overwhelmed. What can I do to help?

A: Sleeplessness, along with loss of appetite and irritability, can be a sign of stress in children. Sometimes kids will also complain of headaches or stomachaches.



First, talk with your daughter about how she’s feeling. Does she feel as if she’s running out of time, or is she unable to relax? If so, you may need to set aside more downtime for her so she can rest and recharge her batteries.

You may want to help her choose an activity or two to drop for a while. Then, see if she feels better after a few weeks with the new schedule. If she doesn’t, contact her school counselor or family physician for additional suggestions. ♥