

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

March 2004

#### SHORT NOTES



##### Rule reminder

Your children may act like they “forget” your family rules. If so, you might want to put the most important ones in writing. *Examples:* Use respectful language. Finish chores before play. Then, hang them in a central place as an easy-to-see reminder.

##### Looking it up

When your child asks you a tough question, say, “Let’s find the answer together.” Then, use an almanac, an encyclopedia, or the Internet to help her answer the question. It’s a great way to build her research skills.

##### Secret buddy

Here’s an idea to build your family’s bonds. Place everyone’s name in a jar. Once a month, each person draw a name. Then, do special things for your “secret buddy.” *Examples:* Leave or send a cheerful note. Do one of the person’s chores.

##### Worth quoting

“To make the world a friendly place, one must show it a friendly face.”

*Anonymous*

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Teacher:** Jane, go to the map and find the Pacific Ocean.

**Jane:** Here it is!

**Teacher:** Class, who discovered the Pacific Ocean?

**Class:** Jane!



## Stock up on learning

Milk, bread, eggs, reading, and math—add a little learning to your shopping list! When you take your child to the grocery store, try these simple activities. They offer real-world ways to practice basic skills.



##### Hunting for bargains

It’s never too early to teach your child about budgeting. Pick a few items from your list. Tell your youngster how much she can spend to purchase them. *Examples:* \$5 for a gallon of milk and a loaf of bread; \$10 for two pizza crusts, shredded cheese, pizza sauce, and pepperoni. Challenge her to find the best prices.

##### Learning from labels

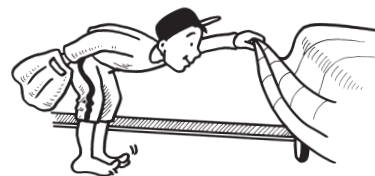
Help your youngster learn about the products you buy. Look at a few labels and talk about the information they provide—serving size, calories, ingredients, and weight. Then, ask your child to find items from specific categories. *Examples:* a salad dressing with fewer than 100 calories per serving, a box of cereal that doesn’t contain sugar, a can of tomatoes that weighs more than 16 ounces.

##### Saving with circulars

Send your child on a savings treasure hunt. All he needs is your grocery list and the week’s grocery store ads. Encourage him to read through the ads and see if any of the items you need are on sale. At the store, he can calculate the savings by subtracting the sale price from the regular price. ♥

##### Pick-up tricks

Tired of nagging your child to pick up his belongings? Here are two ways to help him clean up his act:



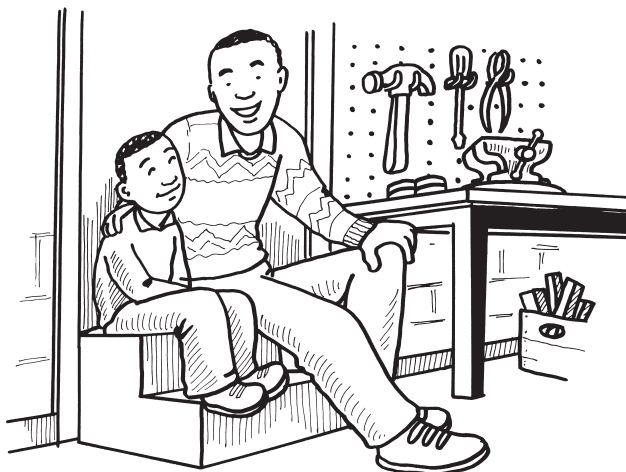
- When your youngster forgets to put things away, hide whatever he leaves out. *Example:* Place his baseball cleats in the dryer. The hassle of searching may motivate him to keep track of essentials.

- Collect video games and other favorite toys that haven’t been put away. Store them in a box under your bed or in your closet. Let your child know she can’t get them without your permission. Consider waiting a few days before returning them. ♥

## Sending the right message

All parents get upset with their children from time to time. The key is learning how to make your feelings known without losing your temper. Try these tips to help you make your point—and stay in control:

- ▲ Plan ahead. Think about what you want to say to your child.
- ▲ Pick a quiet spot and talk where other family members can't overhear.
- ▲ Avoid blame. Three-part messages (When you... I feel... because...) can help. *Example:* "When you fight with your



brother, I feel upset because I care about you and want you to get along."

- ▲ Rephrase what your youngster tells you. *Example:* "You're saying that Bryce used your markers without asking first."
- ▲ Try to focus on one topic. Your child is more likely to understand your point if you stick to it.
- ▲ Take a break. If the conversation gets heated, stop and agree to try again later.
- ▲ End on a good note. A hug or "I love you" lets your youngster know that you care about her. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Science detectives

Did you know that no two fingerprints are the same? That's why detectives use them to solve crimes. Your child will have fun collecting evidence with this unique science activity.

**Materials:** paper, pencil, transparent tape

Start by having your youngster fill in a one-inch circle on a piece of white paper with a pencil. (The darker the circle, the clearer the fingerprint will be.) Tell him to press his thumb or finger on the circle first, and then on the sticky side of a small piece of tape. Peel off the tape and stick it on the paper.

Challenge your child to collect prints from people of different ages. How are they alike? How are they different?

**Variation:** Use colored pencils to create fingerprint art. Your youngster can draw faces, arms, and legs on the fingerprints to create unusual creatures! ♥



## Q & A

### Celebrating differences

**Q:** I recently heard my son and daughter joking about a blind man in our neighborhood. How can I teach them to be more accepting?

**A:** To help your children develop a respectful, tolerant attitude toward others—regardless of their mental or physical conditions—try these suggestions.

Let your youngsters experience what a disability might be like. How? Have them wear earplugs or a blindfold or use only one arm or leg for a short time. Then, talk about what they experienced.

Look for children's books whose main characters have disabilities, and read them aloud together. Ask your youngsters to think about the characters' lives and the ways they are similar. One classic to start with is *The Secret Garden* by Frances Hodgson Burnett.

Remind your kids that it's hurtful to stare, whisper, or tease others. People may look different on the outside, but they feel the same emotions on the inside. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Spelling solution

My daughter Laura used to hate studying for her weekly spelling tests. She wasn't doing well on them, so I called her teacher for suggestions. She told me about several spelling games we could play together.

So, on Thursday evenings, Laura spends 15 minutes

studying her words. Then, we put them into action playing word games like Memory. She writes each of her words on two slips of paper (a study booster in itself). Then, we place them all facedown and try to pick matching pairs.

Now that Laura has the games to look forward to, she has actually started to enjoy learning her words! ♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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