

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

February 2009



Crab Orchard School
Mrs. Debbie Hale, School Counselor

SHORT NOTES

Kindness soup

Warm up winter days with this idea. On slips of paper, write ways to be nice to one another (hang up someone's coat, give a compliment). Put them in a soup bowl. Each day, a family member draws one and follows the suggestion. When the bowl is empty, celebrate with a batch of your family's favorite soup.

Roll, write, and read

Give your child a math lesson by having her read large numbers aloud. Let her toss four dice and arrange the digits to make the highest possible number. Then, ask her to read it. *Example:* Roll a 1, 3, 5, and 6. Arrange them as 6,531, and read it as "six thousand, five hundred and thirty-one."

Healthy teeth

February is National Children's Dental Health Month. Celebrate with a kitchen makeover. Let your youngster help you move healthy snacks (raw fruits and vegetables, cheese, whole-grain crackers) to the front of the refrigerator and pantry. Encourage him to drink water and milk instead of soda or sugary fruit juice. *Note:* Remind him to brush his teeth at least twice a day.

Worth quoting

"We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence, therefore, is not an act but a habit." *Aristotle*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do you answer that never asks a question?

A: A telephone.



Learning to study

Evan, a first-grader, has a spelling quiz every Friday. Sarah, a fourth-grader, takes a history test at the end of each month. Studying is a skill these youngsters will need throughout their years of school. Here's how to help your child study effectively.

Start a habit. Encourage your youngster to treat studying as a daily assignment, not just something he does the evening before a test.

For example, he might study 15 minutes every night for a spelling test on Friday. After he finishes his regular homework, he can spend a little time reviewing his notes and handouts.

Tackle textbooks. When your child has a chapter to study, have him "preview" it to increase his understanding. He should glance over headings, graphics, and photos and go to the glossary to look up boldfaced words.

Tip: If he finds a section hard to grasp, he could read a picture book on the



topic. For a science unit on matter, for instance, he could try *What Is the World Made Of?* by Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld.

Mix it up. If your youngster reviews information in several ways, he'll be more likely to remember it. He might use colored pencils to copy each spelling word or math fact onto a separate index card. Then, he can shuffle the cards and study them in a different order each time. For extra reinforcement, suggest that he spell each word or recite each fact aloud.♥

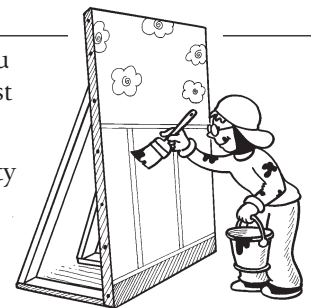
Spring sign up

Whether your child is an athlete or an actress, you can help her find an extracurricular activity that's just right for her.

■ Encourage her to try out for a school or community play. If she'd prefer to work behind the scenes, she might help with sets or costumes.

■ Get a catalog or go online to learn about recreation center and library classes. Help your youngster choose something she hasn't tried (sign language, crocheting).

■ Suggest that she join a team sport like baseball, swimming, or soccer. Or she could try another physical activity such as modern dance or yoga.♥



Three cheers for cooperation

Two, four, six, eight... let's all cooperate! Cheer your child on to better cooperation with these ideas:

- Get your youngster on your side. When you need her to do something, use words like "let's" and "we." *Example:* "Let's get out the door so we'll get a good seat at the movies."
- Award badges for cooperative behavior. Choose fun titles, such as "Super Cleaner," when your child helps wipe up a



big spill. Write them on stars cut from construction paper. Hole-punch and string yarn through the star to make a necklace for your child to wear. It will serve as a reminder of her cooperative behavior.

- Work cooperatively to complete a task. You might set up an assembly line to mail thank-you notes your child wrote for her birthday gifts. Assign one family member to each task. Mom addresses envelopes, your daughter folds the notes and puts them inside, and Dad seals and stamps the mail. Your youngster will see that the project is easier—and more fun—when everyone helps.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

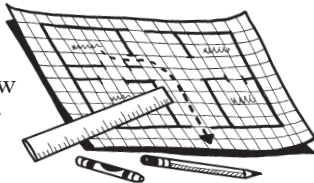


Map to safety

Creating a fire escape plan will build your child's map skills while making your family safer.

Materials: graph paper, pencil, ruler, red crayon

Help your youngster draw a map of your house. Walk around the house as he sketches each room. For instance, the kitchen might be a large rectangle, and his bedroom could be a small square.



When his map is complete, help him place a red X on all the doors and windows in the house. Then, he should draw arrows from each room to the outside. Also, choose a family meeting spot outdoors, such as a neighbor's yard or the sidewalk, in case of an emergency. Have him write the location on the bottom of the map.

Finally, make copies of your child's plan, and post one in each room of your house. Use them for a family fire drill each month.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Allowance accounting

Our daughter Olivia asked if she could have an allowance. My husband and I thought it would be a good opportunity to teach her about spending and saving.

My father-in-law, an accountant, had some good advice. First, he said, we should help Olivia decide on a percentage of her allowance to save each week. He also suggested that she keep track of her spending and savings in a "money journal."

We got a spiral notebook and taped a large envelope inside the cover. Each Sunday when Olivia gets her allowance, her savings goes in the envelope. The rest goes in her purse. Once a month we take the savings to the bank.

When she buys something, she writes the item and its price in the notebook. I think her grandfather's idea was pretty clever—now Olivia knows exactly where her money goes, and she thinks more carefully about how she spends it.♥



Q & A

Grammar goofs

Q: My son makes grammatical mistakes when he talks. For example, he'll say "teached" instead of "taught." How can I help him speak correctly?

A: Try to be a role model for good grammar without sounding like you're correcting your child. When he says, "Mrs. Smith taught us cursive," rephrase his statement: "She taught you cursive?"

Avoid calling attention to his mistakes in front of others, and

don't nag him about them. He will gradually outgrow most errors if he hears good grammar regularly. Reading to him on a regular basis will also let him hear how words are used and how sentences are put together.

Tip: If you aren't sure about a grammar rule, look it up together. Try a Web site such as <http://englishplus.com/grammar> or a book like *Checking Your Grammar* by Marvin Terban.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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