

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

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SHORT NOTES

Is my child over-scheduled?

Take a moment to review your youngster's after-school schedule together. While there's no magic number of activities that's right for every child, consider whether she has enough time to do homework and enjoy downtime. If one or more days each week are jam-packed, think about having her drop an activity.

School supply inventory

The year is halfway over! Your youngster's school supplies may be running low, so check if he needs more pencils, paper, or calculator batteries. You might also ask his teacher about shared items like tissues or glue. *Note:* Contact the school counselor if you need assistance in getting supplies for your child.

Good handwriting matters

Although your youngster will type more of her work as she gets older, it's still important for her written assignments to be legible. Also, she will be less apt to make math mistakes if she writes numbers clearly. Encourage her to take pride in completing her work neatly.

Worth quoting

"I know nothing in the world that has as much power as a word. Sometimes I write one, and I look at it until it begins to shine." *Emily Dickinson*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do you call a boomerang that doesn't work?

A: Lost.



Motivated to learn

What's the best way to keep your child inspired to learn? Help him learn to motivate himself! Raise a self-motivated youngster with this advice.

Point to the future

Your youngster may feel more motivated to learn something if he understands how it will be important later. Tell him about ways you use school subjects like math and writing at work. You might explain how you count the money in your cash register and compare it to sales receipts when your shift ends. Or show him advertisements that you helped to write or design.

Move on from mistakes

There are two ways to react to mistakes: Feel discouraged, or get motivated. Encourage your child to look at a mistake as an opportunity to succeed next time. If he made careless errors on a report, for example, he could proofread papers more



carefully in the future (take a break before proofing, read backward).

Celebrate hard work

Have your youngster find natural motivators when he is faced with a big job. For instance, he may plan to read a new mystery he's been looking forward to after finishing a challenging book for school. Or you might let him organize a fun family activity that's related to his science project—perhaps a visit to a cavern if his experiment involves minerals.♥

Winter workouts

No matter what the weather, your family can stay active this winter. Try these ideas.

Sticky catch. Use gloves for more than keeping warm. Get Velcro circles with sticky backs (available at craft stores), a Wiffle ball, and a pair of knit gloves. Stick Velcro pieces all over the Wiffle ball. Each person wears one glove, leaving one hand free to throw. Go outside for a game of catch!

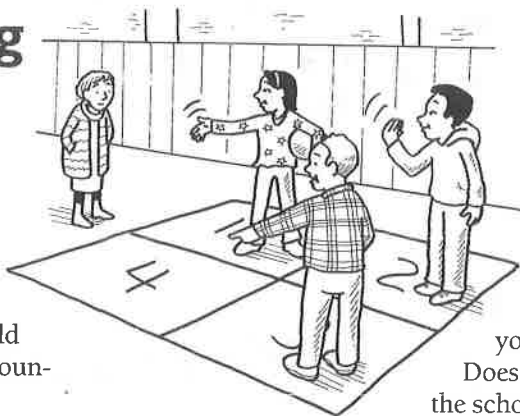
Fitness hunt. Ask each family member to draw and label pictures of physical activities (making snow angels, doing forward rolls). Hide the drawings, and race around trying to find them. When you spot one, do the activity five times. Then, hide that picture for someone else to find.♥



Speak out about bullying

It can take courage for your youngster to ask for help when she or a classmate is bullied. Here are ways to reassure her that it's okay to speak up.

To start a conversation... "What have you heard in school about bullying?" Simply opening the lines of communication may make your child feel comfortable coming to you if she witnesses bullying or is a victim of it herself. If she doesn't have much to say, you could talk about what you've heard or relate situations you encountered as a youngster.



If she is bullied...

"I'm glad you told me. Let's decide how I can support you." Children who are bullied may feel helpless. Discuss options so your youngster feels more in control. Would she be okay with your talking to her teacher? Does she want to meet with the school counselor?

When a classmate is bullied... "What could you do to help?" Together, brainstorm ideas. Have her think about where the bullying takes place. She might ask the child to play with her at recess or sit with her on the bus or at lunch. Or she could walk with her classmate to tell an adult about what happened.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Think like a historian

Does your child know that history isn't just something that happened a long time ago? In fact, history is made every day. Let him be a historian with this activity.

Find and document

Have him pay attention to history-making events like "firsts" (his little brother's first steps), unusual occurrences (the decade's biggest snowfall), or significant changes (moving to a new house). Encourage him to document each event by writing about it or making audio or video recordings.



Analyze and predict

Like a historian, he should analyze why the event is important and what we might learn from it. He might say, "We normally get a dusting of snow in our state, but this week we got six inches," and "Now we know how snow drifts when the wind blows."

Idea: Let your youngster share his historical "document" with your family by reading aloud what he wrote or playing his recording.♥



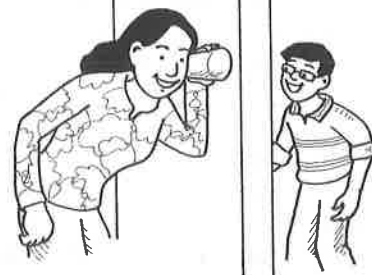
PARENT TO PARENT

Teach me!

My son recently had what I thought was an unusual homework assignment. He had to study for a science quiz by teaching me the material, and I was supposed to write a sentence about what I learned.

It turned out to be interesting and helpful for both of us. I learned something new—about how sound travels better through solid objects than through liquids or gases—and my son earned a good grade on his quiz. We realized that talking it through in his own words was a good way for him to study. Also, I think it boosted his confidence to be able to teach me something I didn't know.

Now instead of asking what he learned in school, I sometimes have him teach it to me. If he struggles to explain it, that's a clue for him to go back and study more, then try again.♥



Q & A

Resolve to find family time

Q: Our New Year's resolution is to spend more time together as a family. Do you have any suggestions for getting our daughters on board?

A: Try letting each girl pick one special event a month for your family to do, such as a winter nature walk or a kite-flying festival. She could plan the activity and be in charge for the day. For ideas, look at calendars from the library or the parks and recreation department.



Also, look for ways to carve out small amounts of time. If you know you won't be able to eat dinner as a family, pick a different meal to eat together that day. Do errands cooperatively, and try to add an element of fun. For example, divide your grocery list in half, break into teams at the store, and see who can get their items first.

Finally, post family plans ("Pancake breakfast on Sunday," "Craft night at the library") to get your daughters excited about what's ahead.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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