

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

October 2005

SHORT NOTES



"A" is for attendance

While it may seem obvious, it's a fact worth repeating: Kids who frequently miss school don't do as well academically as those who attend every day. To help your child succeed, make sure she goes to school on time every morning, and try not to take her out of class except for illness or emergencies.

Geography fun

Show your youngsters that studying geography can be a blast. Visit the National Geographic Society Web site together. You'll find far-out facts and cool geographical news from around the world. Offers homework help, games, and activities, too. Check out www.nationalgeographic.com/kids.

Lighten the load

Does your child carry a backpack to school? Overloaded book bags can cause back pain and poor posture. It's best if backpacks weigh no more than 20 percent of your youngster's body weight. Straps should be well padded, and your child should use both straps.

Worth quoting

"Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew." *Cicely Tyson*

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Why are you so late?

Student:

I obeyed the "School ahead. Go slow" sign!



Smart discipline

When your child misbehaves, how do you handle it? If you're like most parents, you've probably tried different techniques to encourage your kids to behave. Here are two that work for many families.

Consequences. Consequences can be natural or logical.

▲ Natural consequences just happen—you don't have to say or do anything. *Example:* If your child leaves his bike out in the rain, it will rust.

▲ Logical consequences are set by you and relate to your rules. For example, the rule is that laundry must be put in the hamper or it will not be washed. If your youngster leaves his dirty soccer uniform on the floor, it won't be clean for his next game.

Privileges. Knowing that privileges or belongings will be taken away can be a



powerful motivator for your youngster's behavior.

▲ Keep in mind that the restriction should be for a short time and appropriate to the behavior. You might put a younger child's favorite toy out of reach if he continuously throws it. For an older child, you could take away TV, computer, or phone time if she doesn't obey the rules for their use.

▲ You could also consider "grounding," which means restricting your youngster from participating in special activities outside the home. *Examples:* visiting a friend, going to a movie. ♥

Lovin' the library!

What's interesting, educational, and free for the whole family? The public library!

Whether you're looking for the next issue of your favorite magazine or your child needs help with a homework assignment, the library has something for everyone. Look for resources like these on your next visit:

- ▣ Books for kids—and grown-ups—of all ages
- ▣ Children's reading and activity programs
- ▣ Audiotapes, videos, and DVDs
- ▣ Computers with Internet access
- ▣ Magazines and newsletters
- ▣ Research materials, such as encyclopedias



Note: Ask the library staff for recommendations and help in finding what you need. ♥

Homework 101

Fixing trouble spots

Is getting your child to do homework a struggle? Here are several common problem areas and suggestions for making homework less of a headache.

Comprehension

The next time your child doesn't understand a homework assignment, have her read the instructions aloud to you. Then, ask her to tell you in her own words what she's supposed to do. *Tip:* If she's still unsure, she could call one of her classmates for help.



Procrastination

If your youngster puts off homework until the last minute, try setting a regular time each day. You may consider sitting nearby while he works—he'll be less tempted to goof off. If your child argues when you announce, "It's homework time," set an alarm clock to do the reminding for you.

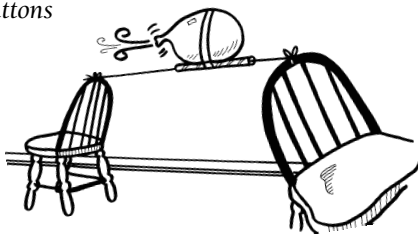
Concentration

After a long day at school, kids can have trouble concentrating. Build short, frequent breaks into homework time. Encourage your child to take "small bites" by helping her divide long assignments into doable chunks. It will be easier for her to focus. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Balloon blast-off

Show air pressure in action with this science activity.

Materials: string, drinking straw, balloon, twist tie, tape, Lifesavers or buttons



Start by running a long piece of string through a drinking straw. Tie each end of the string securely to objects at opposite ends of a room—kitchen chairs work well. Blow up a balloon and close the end with a twist tie. Tape the balloon to the straw lengthwise.

Slide the straw and balloon to one end of the string, loosen the twist tie, and watch as the balloon races to the other end.

Variation: String Lifesavers or buttons in front of the straw. See how many the balloon can push across the string. Or set up several strings and balloons and have a race. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
3035 Valley Avenue, Suite 103, Winchester, VA 22601
(540) 723-0322 • rfeustomer@aspenpubl.com
ISSN 1540-5621

Q & A Understanding differences

Q: One of my daughter's classmates uses a wheelchair. She doesn't seem to know how to act around him. How can I help her feel more comfortable?

A: Start by talking with your daughter about her classmate's disability. Explain that the two of them are probably more alike than different. For instance, they may both like to play with their friends and listen to the same music. You could also read books about disabilities together, such as *Deenie* by Judy Blume and *Ian's Walk: A Story About Autism* by Laurie Lears.

Finally, encourage your youngster to make an effort to get to know her classmate. She'll learn to accept and appreciate the differences that make people unique—and probably make a new friend in the process. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Volunteer at school—from home!

When my son started school, I really wanted to be involved in his classroom. But because of my work schedule, I didn't have time to volunteer during the day. I wondered if there was a way I could get involved without being at school.

At our fall parent-teacher conference, I talked with my child's teacher and found out that there are lots of ways I

can help from home. She said she'd love to have someone type up the class newsletter, assemble materials for lessons, or help coordinate special events like the school play or parent night.

I'm now typing the weekly class newsletter every Thursday evening. I feel good knowing I'm helping out, and the newsletter also keeps me informed about what's going on at school. ♥

