Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

April 2019

Northwest Local School District
Title I

SHORT NOTES

D.E.A.R. Day

This April 12, celebrate Drop Everything and Read Day with a reading campout—or "camp-in." Pitch a tent in the backyard, or let your youngster make a living room fort. Then, take turns reading aloud, read silently together, or do both. *Idea:* Encourage regular reading by making D.E.A.R. a monthly tradition.

DID YOU KNOW?

Spending time outdoors can build your child's observation skills. Play "I Spy" with clouds ("I spy a cloud that looks like a rabbit") and see who else can spot it, too. Or take a walk with a magnifying glass, and have your youngster look closely at plants and animals.

Online homework

If your youngster does homework online, you may wonder how to support him. Just like with pencil-and-paper assignments, invite him to explain his homework to you, and ask to look over his finished work before he sends it. Also, make sure he closes tabs he's not using for assignments so he doesn't get distracted.

Worth quoting

"The shortest way to do many things is to do only one thing at a time."
Richard Cecil

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What's black, white, and red all over?

A: A zebra with a sunburn.

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Being responsible

Megan keeps up with her homework and is always ready for soccer practice on time. The reason? She has learned about responsibility from a young age. Consider these hands-on ways to help your youngster be responsible, too.

Part of the team

Show your child that everyone's responsibilities matter. Have her cut bookmark-sized strips of paper and write a family activity on one (eating dinner). On the others, she should write jobs that make it happen (plan the meal, buy groceries, cook, set the table). Now let her link the strips to make a chain. She'll see that dinner relies on everyone doing their job!

Around the clock

Help your youngster get in the habit of handling her responsibilities on time. Let her draw a clock on paper or poster board and add sticky notes labeled with daily tasks. She might put "Homework" at 4 p.m. and "Walk the dog" at 7 p.m. Have her post the clock in a visible spot as a reminder.

Caught in the act

"Catch" your child being responsible, and tell her you noticed. ("That was responsible of you to throw away your trash.") You could even snap photos of her responsible behavior (say, making her bed) and hang them on the refrigerator. Seeing the photos will inspire her to continue being responsible.♥

Review report cards

When your child's next report card arrives, use it to encourage him to finish the school year strong. Try these strategies for discussing it.

1. Give your youngster and his report card your full attention. For example, find a quiet spot, put away your phone, and turn off the TV.

2. Find reasons to high-five your child. Maybe he brought up his writing grade or the teacher commented on how well he gets along with classmates.

3. Talk about ways he could improve. If his math grade dropped, he might double-check work for careless errors. Or if he needs to be more organized, share strategies you use, like keeping office supplies in different-sized containers.♥

Build a rich vocabulary

Where will your child hear the word *stethoscope*? What synonym could he use for *hilarious*? Hearing and saying words in context is a good way for your youngster to learn and remember them. Consider these ideas to improve his vocabulary.

Match places with words. Ask your child to name a place in your community (*bakery*, *swimming pool*). Take turns saying a word you might hear or say there. When you run out of familiar words (*doughnut*, *swim*), try to come up with less common ones (*aroma*, *chlorine*). The last person who thinks of a word picks the next location.

Use synonyms. Hold a conversation full of synonyms—words with similar meanings. Your youngster might say, "The *funniest thing happened* in the *cafeteria* today." Then, go back and forth, replacing as many words as possible with synonyms. *Examples:* "What *hilarious incident occurred* in the *lunchroom*?" or "I love it when *comical events transpire* in the *canteen*!" *Tip:* Keep a thesaurus or dictionary handy to find new synonyms.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Fraction flowers

Spring is in bloom—and so are these "flowers" that let your youngster explore fractions.

1. Have your child color three paper plates, each a different color.

2. She can use a ruler and marker to draw lines dividing the plates into fractions—one into halves, another into fourths, and the other into eighths.

3. Ask her to label each "petal" with its fraction ($\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{1}{8}$) and cut the plates apart on the lines.

4. Now let your youngster see which fractions are *equivalent*—or represent the same parts of a whole—by creating flowers with different color petals. For example, if she glues a purple half and two orange fourths onto a new plate, that's a whole flower ($\frac{1}{2} + \frac{1}{4} + \frac{1}{4} = 1$).♥

PARENT TO PARENT Teachable moments

During a recent game of disc golf at a local park, our family had some fun conversations—and I think my daughter Esme learned a lot, too.

It started when Esme said she was going to "toss the Frisbee." I pointed out that the disc wasn't actually a Frisbee! I explained that *Frisbee* is a brand name that people use generically. Soon we were naming all sorts of products like that, such as inline skates (*Rollerblades*) and ice pops (*Popsicles*).

Then, as we played, Esme asked why there were three different types of discs in the game. That led us to a conversation about engineering, as we examined the discs and talked about how their designs affect how far, fast, or straight they fly.

All this made me realize that simple family outings can be learning opportunities!♥

Q & A Handling complaints

Q: *My son has been complaining a lot lately, even about little things. For example, he'll gripe if we're out of his favorite cereal or his sister moves his backpack. How can I handle this?*

A: Try acknowledging your son's feelings in a calm, upbeat voice. Then, encourage him to find a solution. You might say, "I know you're disappointed about your cereal. What could you eat instead?"

Resist the urge to say, "That's nothing to complain about," which can discourage him from expressing his feelings. Instead, brainstorm ways to "flip" his thinking. For instance, he could say, "I have cereal every day, so it might be nice to eat something different."

With practice, he'll get out of the habit of complaining—and make life more pleasant for everyone.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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