Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

January 2019

Northwest Local School District
Title I

SHORT NOTES

A fresh start
Help your youngster begin 2019 on a positive note. As she returns to school after winter break, have her ease back into familiar routines. She may need gentle reminders to resume habits like setting an alarm before bed, packing a snack in the morning, or showing you papers from her backpack after school.

Everyday fitness
To inspire your child to lead an active lifestyle, look for ways to fit physical activity into his day. For instance, turn on upbeat music and dance while the two of you do chores. Or he could do jumping jacks while waiting for the microwave to beep.

DID YOU KNOW?
Laughing releases feel-good hormones that relieve stress. Take time each day to enjoy a good laugh with your youngster. Write a joke on a sticky note, and put it on her placemat at the dinner table. Share a funny video you find, or play a game that will make everyone laugh, such as charades or Pictionary.

Worth quoting
"Children are our most valuable resource." *Herbert Hoover*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What has one eye but can't see?

A: A sewing needle!

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Read to succeed

Whether your child is solving a word problem in math or following instructions for a science experiment, strong reading skills play an important role. Here are activities to build his comprehension as he learns in three key subjects.

Math

Suggest that your youngster read a math story problem aloud and then retell it in his own words—leaving out the numbers! This allows him to focus on what the problem is asking him to do before he tries to solve it. *Example:* "A panda had a lot of bamboo. Then he ate some. Now he has less. How much bamboo does he have left?" He'll know that he needs to subtract.

Science

Diagrams, charts, tables, and other graphics help your child "see" science concepts. Encourage him to create his own visual aids. If he's reading about the layers of the Earth, maybe he will draw a diagram and label the *crust*, *mantle*, *outer core*, and *inner core*.

History

Your youngster will go back in time by reading historical fiction about topics he studies. He'll feel as if he's walking the streets of ancient Greece, for instance, while also getting background information on people, places, and events. He might try a series like Magic Tree House (Mary Pope Osborne) or Blast to the Past (Stacia Deutsch and Rhody Cohon).♥

Stay in touch with teachers

Think of communication with your child's teacher as an ongoing conversation. Consider these tips.

- **Share the good.** Let the teacher know that your youngster enjoyed working on a project or that you liked the class play. Email her, or send a note to school with your child.
- **Work through problems.** If the teacher contacts you with a concern about your youngster, first listen to what she has to say. Respond calmly, and ask what you can do at home to help. Then, follow up with the teacher regularly to see how things are going.♥

What does respect mean?

Showing respect will be easier for your youngster if she knows what respect sounds like and looks like in everyday life. Try these ideas.

Make a "quote board." Have your child label a poster board or a bulletin board "The Sounds of Respect." When a family member hears respectful language, she can write it on a sticky note and add it to the board. For instance, your youngster might overhear a teller at the bank say, "Thank you for your service" to a customer in a military uniform. Or maybe you'll notice that your child asks her brother respectfully, "Could you please sing more quietly while I finish my homework?"

Draw a comic strip. Brainstorm ways people show respect, such as by keeping commitments or respecting others' wishes. Then, your youngster can create a comic strip that illustrates one of the examples. Perhaps she'll draw one panel that shows her arranging a get-together with a friend, a second panel where a different friend invites her to a movie she's anxious to see, and a third with her sticking to her original plans.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Adventures by mail

Your child can explore the world without leaving home! This activity turns him into a "flat traveler"—like Flat Stanley in the popular book series.

First, let him mail a photo of himself and a letter to a relative or friend who lives out of town. He could write questions that will help him learn about the place, perhaps about the weather, language, foods, geography, or landmarks.

The person should mail back answers, along with photos and even tourist brochures or postcards. For instance, his aunt may snap a picture of your child's photo on a snowy mountain or in front of a famous skyscraper.

Suggest that your youngster put everything in a scrapbook that he can read to remind him of the places "he" has been. Then, he can send his photo on another adventure with a different long-distance relative or friend!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Participating in class

My son, Sam, has always been a quiet kid. This year, his teacher told me that he rarely speaks up in class and prefers to work alone. So together, she and I came up with strategies to help Sam participate more.

Now as part of Sam's homework, he decides on one question or comment about the material to share in class the next day. Practicing what he plans to say prepares him to speak up. Also, when the teacher assigns group projects, she tries to put Sam on a team that includes at least one student he knows well.

The teacher reports that Sam is speaking up more often. And the other day, he came home excited about a great idea his partner had for the diorama they're working on together.♥

Q & A

Sharpen critical thinking

Q: *At a recent curriculum night, the principal talked about critical thinking. Are there fun ways to work on this at home?*

A: Absolutely! And the great thing about building thinking skills is that your child doesn't need any materials—just her brain.

Try holding a family debate, with a twist. Ask a question like "Which is better, basketball or baseball?" Let each person answer, then argue in favor of the sport she *didn't* choose. Your youngster will need to think critically to take a view that's the opposite of her own. For instance, a baseball fan might say that basketball is more fast-paced and exciting.

Or encourage your daughter to look at familiar situations in new ways. Have her pick a situation or an event (say, a snowstorm). Now take turns looking at it from others' perspectives. How would a truck driver, a toddler, or a squirrel feel about the snow?♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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