

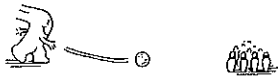
Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Catholic

SHORT NOTES



Speak clearly

To boost your child's communication skills, let her introduce herself when she meets people rather than doing it for her. Also, encourage her to be clear and specific when asking for help. If she says, "I can't do this," you might respond, "What are you asking for help with?"

Rested and ready

When your youngster wakes up easily and feels ready to start the day, that's a good sign he's getting enough sleep. But if he's too groggy in the morning or he's sleepy in school, try slowly adjusting his bedtime until he feels alert in class. *Note:* Experts recommend 10–11 hours of sleep per night at this age.

DID YOU KNOW?

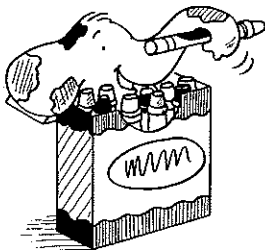
Repetition helps your child's brain form new connections. Say she wants to improve her soccer dribbling skills. She might practice for a certain number of minutes every day. Or if she'd like to learn origami, she could check out a library book on the topic and work on her favorite designs.

Worth quoting

"The whole world opened to me when I learned to read." *Mary McLeod Bethune*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did the elephant paint himself different colors?



A: So he could hide in the crayon box!

Consequences that work

Matthew was supposed to put away his toys and games, but he didn't. So when his mom tripped over a block, she thought carefully about what an appropriate consequence for him might be. Consider the following ideas to set consequences that encourage your youngster to listen and follow rules.

Make it logical

A consequence should relate to the situation at hand and promote the behavior you want. If your child, like Matthew, doesn't put his things away, you might say he has to store them away for a period of time. Living without them may make cleaning up more important to him.

Keep it reasonable

Take into account your youngster's age and stage of development. A little one may lose screen time for a day if he won't turn off the TV when you ask him to. An older child might have to go



without electronics for a week if you see him posting on a social media site he's not allowed to use.

Allow natural outcomes

Let your youngster learn from what happens naturally. Say he wants to wear his school T-shirt on Spirit Day, but he didn't put it in the hamper. The result? He will need to wear something else. Or if he forgets his trumpet on band day, he won't be able to play his instrument with the rest of the class. ♥

Attention! Attention!

Staying focused during class will help your child do her best work. Here are strategies that can make a difference.

Role play. Pretend you're the teacher, and have your youngster show you what a student who is paying attention looks like. She might sit quietly with her eyes focused on you.

Stretch attention span. Suggest that your child do activities that require concentration. Examples include putting together jigsaw puzzles or building a house of cards.

Remove distractions. Encourage her to keep only what she needs on her desk. For instance, she should put away art supplies during a social studies lesson.

Note: If your youngster has trouble focusing at home, ask her teacher how well she focuses during school. The teacher can share what she notices and offer advice. ♥



Pumpkin power

What's orange and round and full of opportunities to learn? A pumpkin! Your child can try these activities.

Math

Have your youngster estimate how many "stripes" (ridges) are on a pumpkin and count to see how close she came. She could paint each stripe as she counts it, switching colors to create a pattern. The colors will help her keep track of the number of stripes—and she'll have a pretty pumpkin to display!



Writing

Suggest that your child design a brochure for an imaginary pumpkin festival. Encourage her to give her festival a name and describe features, such as mini-pumpkin hunts, pumpkin catapults, or hayrides.

Science

Your youngster may be surprised to discover that pumpkins float. Let her try making boats out of them. She could start with a whole-pumpkin boat (cut off the top and scrape out the insides). Then, help her carve boats of different sizes and shapes, perhaps deep and wide or shallow and narrow. How does the design affect whether they float or sink?♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

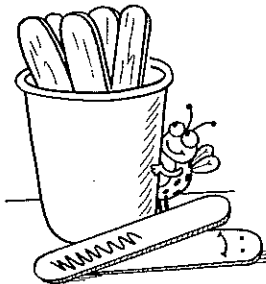


"Sticky" vocabulary

Play this game with your youngster to help him learn vocabulary words.

Materials: marker, craft sticks, cup, dictionary or textbook

Let your child write each vocabulary word (or boldface word from a textbook) on the end of a craft stick. On three



more sticks, he should draw "frowny faces" instead of writing words. When he's finished, have him place all the sticks in a cup, printed ends down. Take turns pulling out a stick and using the word in a sentence that makes its definition clear. Check the dictionary or textbook—if you're right, keep the stick. If not, return it to the cup. But be careful: Draw a frowny face and you lose all your sticks! (Set each frowny face aside after it's drawn.)

When all sticks have been claimed, the player with the most wins.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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PARENT TO PARENT

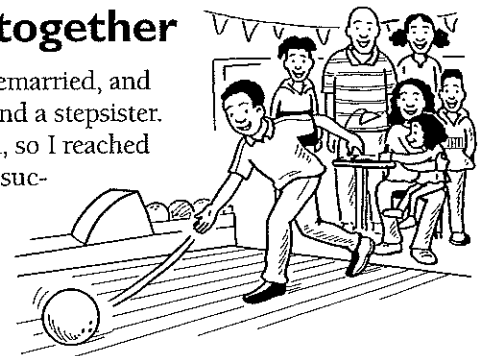
Blending together

I recently got remarried, and my children now have a stepbrother and a stepsister. My husband and I want us all to bond, so I reached out to a coworker to see how she had successfully blended her new family.

Nancy recommended that we find pastimes everyone can enjoy together. That way, the children will get to know each other in a more relaxed way. We asked the kids for ideas, and they thought of bowling, skating, and playing board games.

My friend also mentioned the importance of respecting each other's space and belongings. So my husband and I made sure to talk to our kids about knocking before entering each other's rooms and asking for permission before borrowing items.

For now, we're taking one day at a time. Recently, we went bowling and had some good laughs. Feeling like a family may not happen overnight, but at least we're on our way.♥



Q & A

Healthy after-school snacks

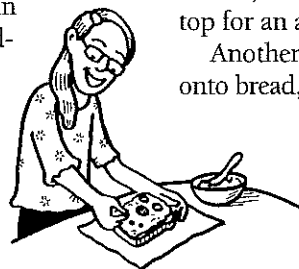
Q: My daughter is hungry after school, but it's hard to come up with nutritious snacks that she's excited about eating. Any recommendations?

A: Add a fun twist to healthy sandwiches by presenting them in a whole new way. Try a sandwich-on-a-stick, for example. Help your child cut whole-grain bread and cooked turkey into small pieces. Then, she can thread them onto a toothpick or bamboo

skewer along with cheese cubes and cucumber slices.

Or core an apple and slice it into rounds. Let her spread peanut or sunflower butter on one slice, sprinkle with raisins, and place a second apple slice on top for an apple sandwich.

Another idea is to scoop tuna salad onto bread, and your daughter can create a smiley face on top. She might use sliced green olives as eyes, a grape tomato for the nose, and chickpeas for the smile.♥



Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

Get going with breakfast

Eating breakfast will help your tween start the day ready to learn. Together, come up with quick and nutritious breakfasts to make at home. Or encourage her to eat a healthy meal in the cafeteria with friends. *Note:* If she receives school lunch at a reduced price or for free, her breakfast will be reduced cost or free, too.

Walk this way

Let your middle grader know it's important to keep his eyes on his surroundings as he walks. He'll avoid serious injury from falling, running into objects, or stepping into traffic. Explain that he shouldn't play electronic games, listen to music, or text while walking—including to and from the bus stop or school.

Conserve resources

Ask your youngster to help your family be more environmentally friendly. Have her research ways you can conserve resources (switch to low-energy light bulbs, recycle more items, take reusable bags when you shop). Then, try to adopt one of her ideas each month.

Worth quoting

"Every strike brings me closer to the next home run." *Babe Ruth*

Just for fun

Q: Why did the boy put honey under his pillow?

A: He wanted to have sweet dreams.



Tween discipline that works

Your middle schooler wants more freedom. You want to keep him safe and set age-appropriate limits. How do you balance his need for independence with the need for rules and consequences? Try these strategies.

Let's review

Go over the rules you have in place and get his input. He'll be happier to comply if he has a say in them. Perhaps he thinks he should be able to go to friends' houses on school nights, and you agree to that for one night a week. Explain your reasons, and be clear you have the final word. Also, lay out consequences so he knows what will happen if he breaks the rules.

Expect to be tested

Tweens tend to push the limits to see how serious parents are and may argue to get out of consequences. Stay calm and on point ("Nevertheless, we agreed you wouldn't eat in your bedroom"). Stick to the consequence you set (having him wash his bedding to get rid of food



stains). He'll see he can't slide by and will be more likely to follow the rules in the future.

Reflect on actions

The goal of discipline is to teach your child good judgment. He can learn a lot by reflecting on his actions. Say he breaks a rule, like heading to a social outing without finishing his homework first. Ask what he *thought* would happen. Maybe he didn't think you'd notice. What happened instead? He has to miss an event this weekend as a result. How could he avoid this situation next time? 👍

Speak up!

Participating in class can help your tween get more value out of school and learn to express herself. Encourage her to contribute with these tips.

- **Find your zone.** Suggest that she participate in ways she feels comfortable with and then expand her "toolbox." She might start off commenting on assigned readings she enjoyed. Eventually, she may speak up when she agrees with someone's viewpoint or to offer a different one.
- **Mix it up.** Class-wide discussions aren't the only opportunity to participate. When your middle schooler works in smaller groups, she could ask and answer questions, make observations, or give opinions. These steps can build confidence for talking in front of the whole class. 👍



Real-world reading

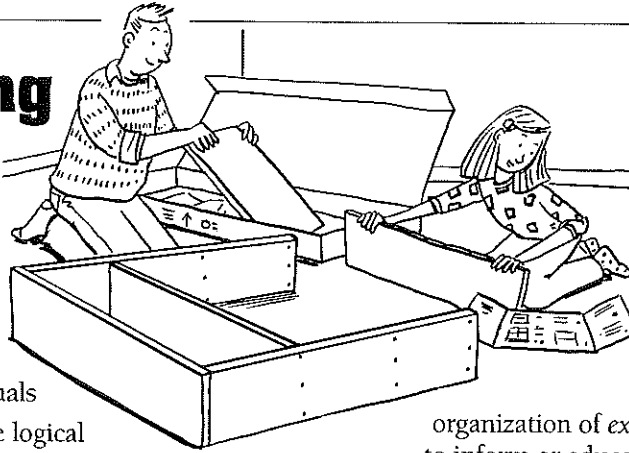
Nonfiction reading is a big part of everyday adult life—at work and home. To help your middle grader learn to pick out and analyze important information, encourage her to read more nonfiction texts now. Here are some easy ideas.

Follow a process

What: Recipes, game directions, how-to manuals

Why: These texts teach youngsters to navigate logical sequences of steps and identify key details.

How: Let your tween read and share directions as family members cook or play a game. Or have her read instructions



as you put together a bookcase or figure out how to operate a new phone or microwave.

Follow the facts

What: News articles, menus, travel guidebooks

Why: Your child will get familiar with the organization of *expository text*, which seeks to inform or educate readers.

How: Talk about news articles you read and what you learn, and inspire her to do the same. If you order carryout food, have her read menus and place the order. When you visit new places, ask her to scan guidebooks and share facts. She can play tour leader, suggesting sights and activities your family will enjoy. 👍

Notable notes

Good notes can help your tween remember what was taught in class, create study guides, and review for tests. Share these steps for being an excellent note taker.

1. Prepare beforehand. Your child will have an easier time keeping up with the teacher if he has read the assigned handouts or chapters. Why? He'll be familiar with the material and vocabulary.

2. Learn each teacher's style. To emphasize crucial material, one teacher may use hand gestures, while another may write phrases on the board. Your middle grader should write that information down and star or circle it.

3. Ask questions. If your child doesn't understand something, he could jot a question mark in the margin of his notes. Then, he can ask about it when the teacher invites questions. Most likely someone else has the same question and will be glad he spoke up. 👍



Q & A

Learning to have grit

Q I've heard that kids need "grit" to be successful. What is it, and how can I teach it to my 12-year-old?

A Grit involves perseverance, courage, and resilience—basically sticking with tasks or goals until you see them through. Having passion will help your child to develop grit, enabling her to stay with something when the going gets tough and to overcome problems along the way.

You can foster grit in your middle grader by explaining it and pointing out examples, such as a coworker who learned to read as an adult. Or bring home library books about famous people who persevered. For instance, Dr. Seuss had his first book rejected by 27 publishers before it was accepted.

Setting up a family challenge can give everyone a chance to be "gritty." Have each person choose something they want to do that might be difficult but is possible. The key? No one is allowed to quit! 👍



Parent to Parent

Get to know new friends

When my son was in elementary school, I always knew his friends. Once he got to middle school, he started hanging out with classmates I'd never heard of.

It worried me to let Jake spend time with kids I didn't know. I asked him to invite them over, and meeting them in person helped put me at ease and gave me a

way to connect faces with names. I asked for their phone numbers and their parents' numbers as well. That way, I could contact them if they were with Jake and I couldn't reach him. Calling the parents to say hello opened the door in case we ever need to get in touch.

I'm still getting to know Jake's pals. But at least I'm feeling more relaxed about his new middle school social scene. 👍



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