

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

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## SHORT NOTES



### Message, please

Your child can practice responsibility as well as writing skills by taking telephone messages. Start by letting her watch you. Show her how you write down the caller's name and number and then repeat the information back to be sure it's right. *Tip:* To encourage message taking, keep a pencil and pad next to the phone.

### Helping from home

If you have a little free time at night or on weekends, ask your youngster's teacher how you can volunteer from home. She may want you to make flash cards or prepare craft projects. Let your child help, and he'll feel special when his class uses the materials.

### Money lessons

Does your child get an allowance? Try giving her a wallet and piggy bank, too. She can keep her spending money in the wallet and put the rest in her bank. As an incentive to save, you might give your youngster a little "interest" on the amount in her bank each month.

### Worth quoting

"Life is a great big canvas, and you should throw all the paint on it you can."

Danny Kaye

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Where can you find an ocean without water?

**A:** On a map!



## Family rules

Rules help your child's classroom run smoothly. Why not have family rules to help your household run smoothly, too? Try these ideas.

### Involve everyone

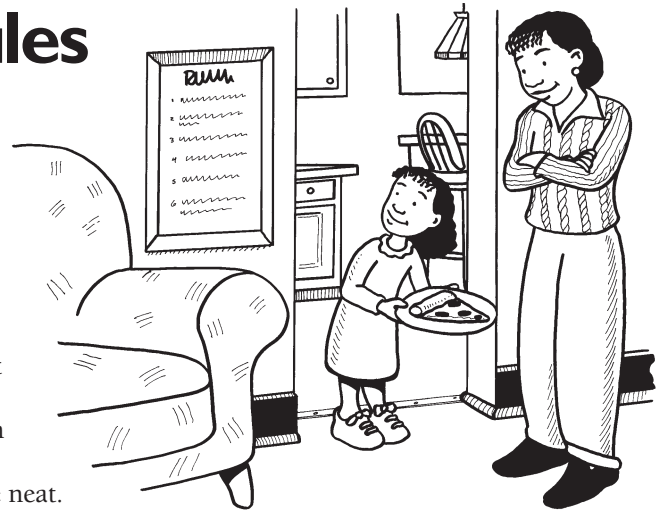
Your youngster will be more agreeable to rules that she helps write. Ask family members for suggestions on getting along better, staying safe, and keeping the house neat. Make a note of every idea—you can narrow the list down later.

### Keep it simple

A short list of clear rules will be easier to follow. Consider putting them in "we" format to show that they apply to everyone. For example, you might write, "We put things back where they belong," and "We speak nicely to each other." Or you can make a list of dos and don'ts: "Do your homework on time." "Don't interrupt when someone is talking."

### Set consequences

Rules will be taken more seriously when children know what will happen if



they're broken. Come up with a logical consequence for each one: "If you fight over a toy, it will be put away." "If you talk back, you'll have a timeout." *Tip:* Post the consequences alongside the rules.

### Refer to rules

When your youngster breaks a rule, help her take responsibility. You can have her look at the list, read the rule she has broken, and tell you the consequence. If she asks to do something that's against the rules (eat in the living room), remind her why your family set the rule (to keep the furniture clean). ♥

## Test tips

Getting ready for a test begins long before test day. Help your youngster do well with these tips.

**Before.** Have him mark test dates on a calendar. Together, work out a study schedule. *Example:* 20 minutes each night.

**During.** Encourage your child to read test directions carefully (show work on math problems, answer in full sentences) and follow them. If he has time at the end, he can reread the directions and make sure he did what was asked.

**After.** When your youngster brings tests home, be sure to praise his effort: "You must be proud of how hard you studied." He'll see the connection between studying and better grades. *Note:* Have him correct any wrong answers. ♥



# Keys to reading success

What will help a child be a successful reader? Here's what three teachers told us:

▣ "Build a home library by collecting inexpensive books from stores, garage sales, school book clubs, and used book sales at the library. Clear a shelf on the family bookcase for your child's books, or get him a bookcase of his own. Encourage your youngster to branch out and read different kinds of books, including poetry, nonfiction, and mysteries."

▣ "Make reading fun by finding new spots for it. You can sit around the dining room table, stretch out with pillows on the



family room floor, or go outside. When you have time, follow up books with activities. For example, read *Snowflake Bentley* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, and then look at snow under a magnifying glass."

▣ "Reading is the easiest way to build your youngster's vocabulary. And

a good vocabulary makes reading

easier! When you read, have your child point to words he doesn't know. Together, look them up in the dictionary. Keep the growing list of words he has learned in a notebook." ♥

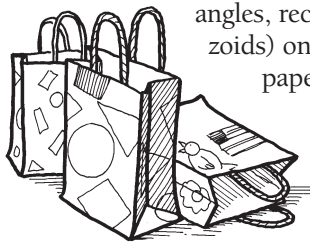
## ACTIVITY CORNER Gift bags

Give your child a chance to practice—and show off—what she's learning in school by making her own gift bags.

**Materials:** paper shopping bags, construction paper, scissors, glue, markers

Have your youngster decorate the bags by using topics she's studying in school.

For example, if she's learning geometry, she can make a shape collage. Suggest that she draw shapes (triangles, rectangles, trapezoids) on construction paper, cut them



out, and glue them onto a bag. If she is studying state history,

she can print out Internet images of state symbols (bird, flower, flag), glue them on, and label each one with a marker.

Your child will be proud to make a gift bag that draws as many compliments as the gift inside! ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT Bedroom makeover

My son Jeremy recently told me that all his friends have televisions in their bedrooms. I didn't want him to have a TV, but I did think we could make his room more inviting. With a little brainstorming and some inexpensive items, here's what we came up with.

First, we put colorful plastic baskets on his closet shelves and filled them with his games, puzzles, and books. Since he loves art, we moved a small table from the basement into his room and stowed supplies in a box underneath.

Finally, we added new decorations. His favorite is the bulletin board. He covers it with photos of his friends and souvenirs from family outings. We also pinned a world map on his wall and hung a shelf to display his baseball trophies.

Now Jeremy enjoys spending time in his room—without a TV! ♥



## Q & A Paying attention

**Q:** My daughter's ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder) makes it hard for her to focus on homework. How can I help?

**A:** Just as she might stretch before a soccer game, your daughter can warm up her body and brain for homework.

You can help her switch gears from playtime to work time. For example, suggest that she draw for five minutes before beginning a project or check her e-mail before typing a report.

Have your child burn off extra energy by exercising first. She can shoot hoops, dance to music, or do toe touches (touching her right toes with her left hand, then her left toes with her right hand).



Let your youngster experiment with different positions for doing homework, such as standing at the kitchen counter or sitting under a table. Switching places for each assignment may keep her focused. ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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