

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2008

Wesley Matthews Elementary School
Dr. Josefina Estrella, Counselor

SHORT NOTES



Learning parties

Throwing a birthday party? Squeeze in learning at the same time. For instance, blast off for a space party. Put out craft supplies for making planets and rockets, and have a space trivia contest. Or host a "book bash," where youngsters dress as their favorite characters.

DID YOU KNOW?

More than half the people who smoke took their first puff by age 14. That means now is a great time to talk to your child about cigarettes. Explain that smoking can lead to serious illness and even death. Also tell him that cigarettes turn teeth yellow and cause bad breath.

Budding independence

Help your youngster become more independent by accepting the choices she makes when possible. *Examples:* Let her choose her clothes for school or decide whether she's ready to sleep at a friend's house. If she sees that you trust her, she'll realize she can make good decisions for herself.

Worth quoting

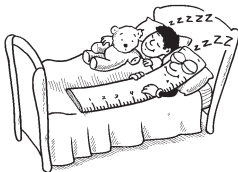
"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up."

Mark Twain

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did Tommy take a ruler to bed?

A: He wanted to see how long he slept.



Math fun

Math is everywhere! Show your child how much fun numbers can be with these kid-pleasing activities.

Fractions

Use fractions to write a snack recipe for your youngster to follow.

Example: Top $\frac{1}{2}$ of a graham cracker with cream cheese, $\frac{1}{4}$ with peanut butter, and $\frac{1}{4}$ with honey.

Practice addition by playing "Fraction 21." Use a marker to turn playing cards into fractions (make the 2 into $\frac{1}{2}$, the 3 into $\frac{1}{3}$, and so on). Take turns drawing cards from the deck, and add them together after each turn. Whoever comes closest to 1 without going over wins the hand.

Patterns

Can your child find patterns in your house? *Hint:* Point to wallpaper, curtains, and clothing. Then, have him draw a picture pattern of his own on poster board (boat, car, plane; boat, car, plane).

Build problem-solving skills with number patterns. Write a series (3, 5, 6, 8, 9), and challenge your youngster to discover the pattern (add 2, add 1, add 2, add 1).

Measurements

When it rains, let your child set a plastic cup outside to catch the drops. Later he can put a ruler in the cup to measure the rainfall.

On a car trip, ask your youngster to figure out how



many feet you travel. Have him multiply the number of miles you drive (75) by the number of feet in a mile (5,280) to work out the distance ($75 \times 5,280 = 396,000$ feet).♥

Going green

Teach your youngster what it means to reuse, reduce, and recycle. Here are everyday ways she can help protect the environment.

■ **Reuse.** Suggest that your child plant seeds in an egg carton or use shoe boxes to organize her dresser drawers.

■ **Reduce.** Ask her to make "Turn it off!" signs to post near light switches and electronics and to turn off the water while she brushes her teeth.

■ **Recycle.** Encourage your youngster to use both sides of computer paper and to use newspaper comics for wrapping paper.

Tip: Each day your child does something to help the Earth, have her color that day's calendar square green. How many green days can she have in a month?♥



Show kindness

How can your child make her little sister smile, her lonely classmate feel special, or her teacher feel appreciated? By being kind! Try these ideas in your home:

- At mealtime, play the “kind words game.” Name someone who’s not at the table (teacher, classmate, coworker), and take turns saying one kind thing about him or her. Encourage everyone to



go a step further and share the kind words with the person.

- Put a jar and a notepad on the kitchen counter. Each time a family member does an act of kindness (shares a favorite toy, calls a sick friend), record it on a note and drop it in the jar. How many are there at the end of the week?

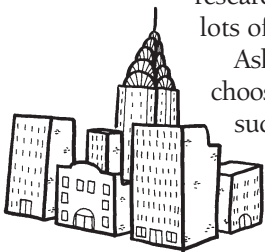
- Write family members’ names on separate paper bags. On slips of paper, have everyone write a kind statement about each person and drop them in the right bag. Read the notes aloud and guess who wrote them.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Web quest

The Internet will seem like a fun, familiar place by the time your child finishes this activity. He’ll also practice research skills and learn lots of interesting facts.



Ask your youngster to choose a subject he likes, such as architecture or coin collecting. Then, have him think of things he’d like to know

about his topic and write down questions. *Examples:* “What are buildings made of?” “How many state quarters are there?” Add your own questions to spur more research: “What is the tallest building in the world?” “Which coins are used in Europe?”

Finally, help your child search the Web for information. He can use child-friendly search engines such as Ask for Kids (www.askforkids.com), CyberSleuth Kids (<http://cybersleuth-kids.com>), or KidsClick! (www.kidsclick.org). Let him type keywords (“building materials,” “state quarters”) into the search box and browse through sites to find the answers.♥

Q & A

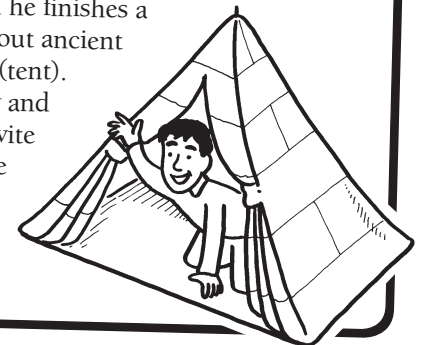
Beat the winter blahs

Q: My son loves third grade, but lately he doesn’t seem as happy to go to school or as willing to do his homework. How can I help?

A: After enjoying winter break, and with spring still a few months away, January can seem like the longest month. Try picking up your youngster’s mood with fun things for him to look forward to.

Maybe you can plan something special when he finishes a classroom unit. For example, if he’s learning about ancient Egypt, have an indoor campout in a “pyramid” (tent).

On cold Saturday mornings, go to the library and have him do his homework there. Or let him invite a friend home from school each week during the winter. Treat them to a cup of hot cocoa while they do their schoolwork. Then, they can play outside (tag, build a snowman) or inside (board games, hide and seek).♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Finding a hobby

I love taking pictures of trees and flowers. One day my daughter Anna asked to try taking a photo with my camera. I showed her how to use it and how I look for a good shot. I was surprised by how creative she was. She took a great close-up of a caterpillar on a leaf.

I told Anna that hobbies such as cooking, scrapbooking, pottery,



and knitting help people relax and be creative. I asked if she’d like me to sign her up for a photography class at our local community center. She was excited, so we called right away.

Anna loves her new class, and it has really brought out her creative side. She especially loves taking black-and-white pictures of animals. And now we have a fun hobby we can share!♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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