

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2007

Wesley Matthews Elementary School
Dr. Josefina Estrella, Counselor

SHORT NOTES



Honesty matters

“Keep your eyes on your own paper.” Your child may hear his teacher say this before a quiz. Explain that honest students do their own work. You can also tell your youngster that his teacher needs to see his answers so she knows what he has learned and where he needs help.

Memory trick

Is your child studying famous people? Share this tip for keeping her facts straight. She can choose one thing about each person and relate it to her own life. For example, thinking of her recent plane trip can remind her that Amelia Earhart was the first woman to fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean.

Rough situations

When families go through tough times, such as divorce or a death, children’s grades can suffer. If this happens in your household, try to stay involved in your youngster’s education (look over schoolwork, attend conferences). Be sure to let the teacher know about the situation. That way, she can understand how your child is feeling.

Worth quoting

“Whenever you do a thing, act as if all the world were watching.”

Thomas Jefferson

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What goes through towns, up and down hills, and around corners, but doesn’t move?

A: A road!



Homework time

Nathan likes to start homework right after school. Elise prefers to relax first. Luis listens to soft music when he studies, while Bella needs silence.

Which homework routine is best? They’re all fine! With help from their parents, these students have discovered what works for them. Use these strategies to help your child find a winning homework routine.

When and where?

Try planning a regular time each day when family members do quiet activities. You’ll help your youngster focus by limiting distractions. For example, she can do homework in the kitchen after school while you pay bills or cook. Or everyone can read in the living room at night while she works in her room.

Take a break

Schedule short periods of work to fit your child’s attention span. If she has an hour of homework, she can do



30 minutes and then take a break (shoot hoops, have a healthy snack) before finishing up. *Tip:* Have her keep track of time—and stay on task—by setting an alarm clock to signal her break.

First things first

Before she starts, help your youngster put her assignments in order. Have you noticed she gets more done when she does written work first? If so, she can complete her math worksheet, then practice spelling words and, finally, study science. *Idea:* Suggest that she rank homework from hardest to easiest and tackle the more complicated work first.♥

Classroom fun — for parents

Most teachers appreciate an extra pair of hands. Here are some ways to fit volunteer time into your schedule:

- Assist with hands-on classroom activities like science experiments or holiday craft projects. If you’re available in the early morning, you could set things up.
- If you have 45 minutes here or there, volunteer in art, music, physical education, or computer class.
- Ask the teacher if you can share a special talent (playing guitar, doing calligraphy).
- Help with an after-school activity (math club, aerobics class).
- If you are free at lunchtime, offer to be a cafeteria or recess monitor.♥



Let's behave!

Did you know that getting your youngsters to behave can be fun? Try these ideas to encourage better behavior—and cut down on everyone's frustration.

Distract. Being playful can stop misbehavior, especially if it's caused by boredom. *Example:* You're stuck inside on a rainy day, and your kids begin to get cranky. Say, "Freeze! Splash time!" Fill the bathtub, cover the floor with towels, and let them play in the water with cups and boats. (*Note:* Never leave children unsupervised near water.) Or call out, "Pillow time," and have



everyone gather in the family room for a gentle pillow fight.

Celebrate. With your children, pick a few behavior goals (get ready for bed without complaining; say "excuse me" when someone is talking). Then, get out a small jar and some marbles. Tell your youngsters they will earn a marble each time you catch them working toward a goal. When the jar is full, celebrate with an extra story every night for a week.

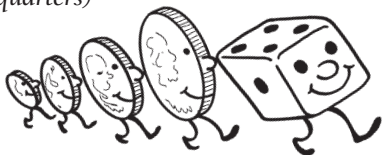
Note: Children often act out to get your attention. Try to spend a few minutes a day playing a game or talking with each child, and you're likely to see better behavior.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER How many coins?

Play this money-changing game to help your child learn about coin values and practice counting.

Materials: 1 die and spare change (20 pennies, 15 nickels, 10 dimes, and 7 quarters)



The object of the game is to end up with the most quarters. Start with the coins in a pile, and take turns tossing the die to find out how many pennies to take. If a player rolls a four, for example, he gets four pennies.

Quickly, the money changing will begin. When your youngster has five pennies, have him exchange them for a nickel. When he gets two nickels, he can trade them for a dime. Two dimes and a nickel can be swapped for a quarter.

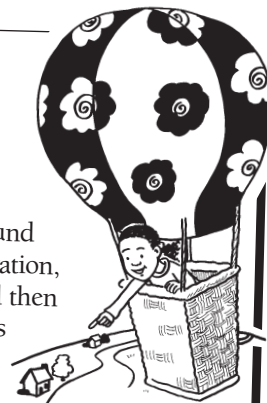
Continue playing until no quarters remain in the pile. The player with the most quarters wins.♥

Q & A Curious learners

Q: I realize it's important to read to my child and make sure she knows her math facts. But what else can I do to help her learn?

A: You can encourage your youngster to notice the world around her and to ask lots of questions. To build her powers of observation, have her look at her surroundings carefully for 10 seconds and then close her eyes. Ask her about what she saw ("How many chairs are in the room?" "What color is the cup on the table?").

Next, get your child to pose questions by playing a simple game of 20 Questions. Secretly choose an object, and have her guess what it is by asking up to 20 yes-or-no questions. *Examples:* "Is it alive?" "Does it make noise?" When she gets the answer, it's her turn to pick an object.♥



PARENT TO PARENT Pass the pebble

My husband and I like to know what's going on in our children's classrooms. But when we would ask them about their day, our normally chatty kids seemed to clam up.

One evening, while taking a walk, I found a smooth, pretty pebble. I took it inside and told our children it was a "talking stone." Whoever was holding it got to tell something interesting that happened that day.

As we passed the stone around, our son told us about a book his teacher was reading to the class. Our daughter shared a story about sitting with a new girl from Korea at lunch.

Soon they were telling about other things that had gone on during the day.

Guess what? Having a talking stone keeps us involved in our kids' lives, and they like hearing what we have to say about our day, too!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators, a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5621