

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2012

Gregory - Portland ISD



SHORT NOTES

Just because

Does your child love science experiments? Or did she enjoy a book her teacher read aloud? From time to time, send a note or an email to let the teacher know what your youngster likes about school. Teachers appreciate hearing good news from parents—and it helps them get to know students better.

Winter mornings

It's dark out, the alarm has gone off twice, and your youngster is still in bed. Sound familiar? Try turning on several lights and playing upbeat music or a funny audiobook. This will help your child feel more energetic and begin to get ready for school.

Be a good neighbor

This year, encourage your family to do at least one volunteer activity per season. During colder months, you might deliver food for Meals on Wheels or collect gloves and coats to donate to shelters. When it's warm, consider planting trees at schools or parks or participating in neighborhood cleanup days.

Worth quoting

"A library is infinity under a roof."
Gail Carson Levine

JUST FOR FUN

Student: "I was born in California."

Teacher: "Which part?"

Student: "All of me."



Friendship matters

Children who have friends tend to do better in school and enjoy it more. Share these ideas to help your youngster make and keep friends.

Start with one

Just one strong friendship can give your child the skills and confidence to build others. Role-play reaching out to a classmate she'd like to know better. She might say, "Nice lunch box. I like fairy tales, too." Remind her to make eye contact, smile, and ask questions ("What's your favorite fairy tale?").

Share good times

Give your youngster opportunities to strengthen bonds with old friends and to find new ones. She could join after-school activities (computer club, chorus) and attend special events (spirit night, math fair). At neighborhood playgrounds and basketball courts, suggest that she be friendly and play with other children so she can make friends who live nearby.



Treat friends like treasures

Your child can be a good friend by remembering that each person is valuable. Ask her to tell you what she likes best about her friends (good sense of humor, fun to play games with). Also, encourage her to show friends that she cares by being supportive when things are going well ("Congrats on the home run!") and not so well ("Sorry you're sick—I'll bring over some magazines after school").♥

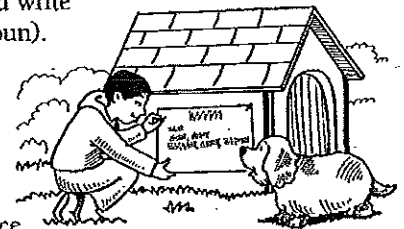
Nouns, verbs, and more

Knowing about parts of speech can make your child a better writer. Here are two fun ways to practice.

1-2-3 poem. Have your youngster write a noun (person, place, or thing) on a piece of paper. On the next line, he should write two adjectives (words that describe the noun). Below that he can add three verbs (action words) about the noun. *Example:*

Dog
Soft, furry
Sleeping, running, fetching.

Fill-in-the-blank story. Write a sentence with one or more missing words ("Once upon a time, there was a _____"). Underneath each blank, write the part of speech that should go there (adjective, noun). Your child fills in the blanks ("colorful rainbow") and adds his sentence. Take turns until you agree that your tale is finished. ♥



Real-life math

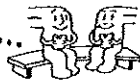
When your child closes his math book, the learning doesn't have to end. Try these suggestions for fitting math skills into everyday activities:

- Appoint your child scorekeeper for family games. He can practice doing math in his head by adding up points for Yahtzee, Scrabble, or Hearts.
- At the grocery store, ask your youngster to estimate 2 lb. of green beans or 3 lb. of potatoes. Then, let him check the weights on the produce scale.



- How much space does he need for a jigsaw puzzle? Have him look at the dimensions on the box (say, 18" x 24") and use a ruler or yardstick to find a spot that's at least 18" wide and 24" long.
- How long will it take to fold a load of laundry or drive to the bank? Suggest that he write down his estimate and then time the task on a cell phone or car clock.

- When you bake, put your youngster in charge of measuring ingredients (1 cup milk, ½ tsp. salt) and finding the right-sized pan (11" x 7", 13" x 9").♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Family Bill of Rights

When my son Jack studied the Bill of Rights, his teacher did something that I thought was clever. She used it to help the kids come up with classroom rules. They listed students' rights and made a rule to protect each one. For example, "Be quiet in class" goes with "the right to learn."

I decided that we would use the Bill of Rights to make household rules.

Just like the class, we started with our rights. Jack and his brother came up with "the right to share your opinion" and "the right to privacy." Then, we added a rule to each one ("speak respectfully" and "knock before entering someone's room").

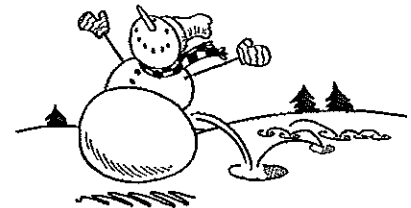


I think linking rights with rules is helping the boys understand why rules are important. And our household is running more smoothly lately!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Snowy fun

Even when there's snow on the ground, your family can get outdoor exercise. Here are two games for everyone to play.



Snowman relay

Collect two sets of snowman accessories (hat, scarf, carrot, buttons), and place each set in a separate bucket at one end of the yard. Divide your family into teams, and have each team build a snowman at the other end of the yard. Then, team members run to the bucket one at a time, grab one accessory, and put it on the snowman. The first team to complete a snowman wins.

Snow-hop

Follow in each other's footprints with this snowy version of hopscotch. Let your child create a hopscotch course in the snow by hopping forward 10 times, landing each time on either one foot or two feet. Everyone else must hop the same way he did so they land in his footprints. Keep playing until each person gets a chance to be the leader.♥

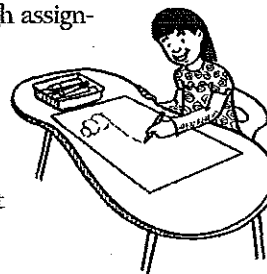
Q & A Dealing with perfectionism

Q: My daughter is a perfectionist. She'll erase handwriting that isn't perfect or throw away a drawing if she makes a mistake. How should we handle this?

A: It's great that your daughter sets high standards for herself. But as you've discovered, perfectionism has its down side. To help her get through assignments without becoming frustrated or sidetracked, suggest that she finish an entire page without erasing. Then, she can go back and decide what she can let go and fix what she really isn't happy with.

When she draws a picture, encourage her to think of it as a rough draft. She might relax if she knows her first attempt doesn't have to be perfect. Then, if she starts over, have her save her drafts so she can look back and see how much she's improving. This can help her be happy with progress rather than perfection.

Finally, treat imperfections as a normal part of life so she can learn to take pride in doing her best. For instance, if she brings home an almost-perfect test, say something like "Your studying really paid off" rather than "Wow! You got only one answer wrong!"♥



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 CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5621

Early Years

WORKING TOGETHER FOR A GREAT START

January 2012

Gregory - Portland ISD



KID BITS

Homemade stationery

Writing thank-you notes is extra fun when your little one makes his own stationery. Let him decorate paper by putting stickers or stamps around the edges. He can write, "Thank you," draw a picture of himself enjoying the gift, and print his name.

Guess the Job

What do grown-ups do at work? Get your child thinking about jobs with this game. Name a worker that she has seen, such as a crossing guard, and ask her to tell you the tools that person uses (whistle, yellow vest). Then, think of another job, name tools for it (ladder, paint), and have her guess what the job is (painter).

Thinking of others

When you ask your youngster to tell you about his day, try taking it a step further: ask him to tell you something good that happened to another child. Perhaps a classmate celebrated a birthday or got a nice compliment from the teacher. This will teach him to think about things from others' points of view.

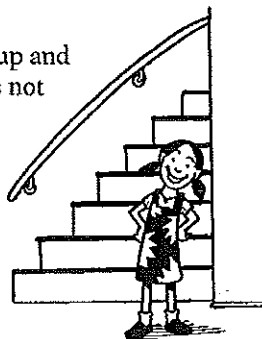
Worth quoting

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best." *Duke Ellington*

Just for fun

Q: What goes up and down but does not move?

A: Stairs.



I can do it!

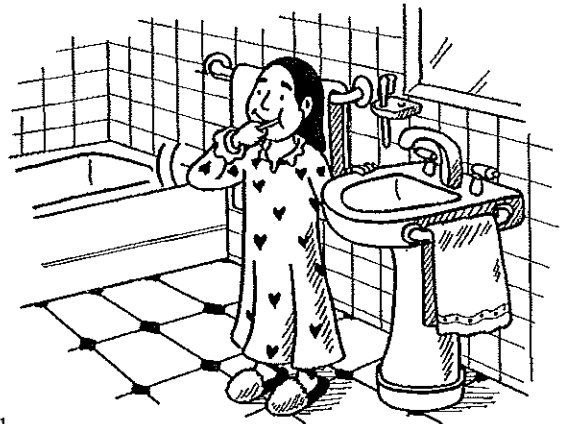
If your youngster is like most children, she wants to be treated like a big kid one minute and a baby the next. In her growth toward independence, both are normal. Here are gentle ways to help her take on challenges every day at home and school.

Set expectations

Let your child know what you expect her to do by herself, such as washing her hands and clearing her plate. When she asks for help, smile and say something like, "I know you can do it! Show me when you're all done." *Tip:* If you're not sure what she should be able to do, ask the advice of her teacher or another person who works with children. Her dentist can tell you whether she's old enough to brush without supervision, for instance.

Use teamwork

Provide backup while letting your youngster do as much for herself as possible. If she's making her bed, for example, suggest that she pull up the sheet



and blanket, and then you tuck in the sides. Also, try to set aside extra time while she's learning. When that's not possible, you might meet her halfway. ("I'll pull the seat belt across your booster, and you fasten it. On the way home, you can do the whole thing, and I'll just check it.")

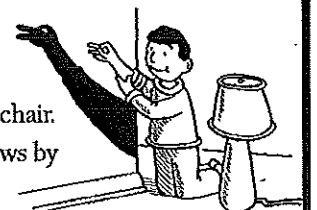
Talk it through

Your youngster learns by watching you. So when you do things that she isn't ready to help with (drying her hair, peeling potatoes), explain the reason for each step. *Example:* "I'm putting part of your hair up so I can dry the bottom layer faster." Later, when you expect her to do it, she'll know how.♥

Move, do, and understand

Teachers know that most youngsters learn best when they're moving around and exploring with their hands and bodies. You can encourage "active" learning at home, too, with these ideas:

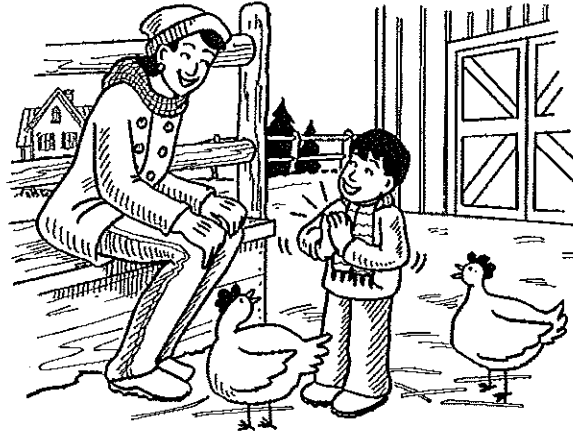
- Let your child play with a ball while he recites numbers or other things he has learned in math. He might count with each bounce or say a day of the week or a month of the year with each toss of the ball.
- Encourage him to act out vocabulary. If he's learning position words, for example, ask him to sit "under" a table, jump "over" his teddy bear, and walk "around" a chair.
- Make science happen. Explain that he can create shadows by blocking light with his hand. Together, form animal-shaped "shadow puppets" on a wall. For example, he can create a duck by keeping his fingers straight while opening and closing his hand.♥



What's in a word?

Being able to pick out individual sounds in words can help your youngster become a better reader. Try these two games to work on rhymes and syllables:

● Let your child choose several three-letter words from a book and copy each one onto an index card. Together, come up with three words that rhyme with each of his choices and write each one on a separate index card. If he picks "red," you might write "bed," "fed," and "led." Mix up the cards, and lay them facedown in rows. Take turns flipping over two cards and helping your youngster



read the words aloud. If they rhyme, keep the pair. If not, flip them back over to end your turn. Play until every card is gone.

● Ask your youngster to think of a one-syllable word (phone) and to clap once as he says it. On your turn, clap twice while saying a

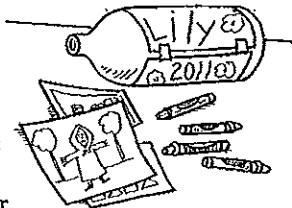
two-syllable word (chicken). Can your child think of a three-syllable word? If not, offer a suggestion, or let him begin the game again with a one-syllable word. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Time in a bottle

Making a time capsule with your child is a good way to look back on her achievements in 2011 and get her thinking about what she'll accomplish in 2012.

Materials: clean 2-liter plastic bottle, crayons, construction paper, glue

Together, go through photographs and school-work from the past year. Ask your youngster to pick 5–10 favorites and tell you about them. She might include a photo from the first day of school, her drawing of a favorite book character, and a pattern she made in math.



Help her roll the items tightly together and slip them into the bottle. Let her make a label to glue on that includes her name and the year. Then, put the bottle in a safe spot (kitchen cabinet, garage shelf) to open one year from now. Encourage your child to think about what she might like to include in next year's capsule, such as a picture of herself riding a bike. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote school readiness, parent involvement, and more effective parenting.

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5567



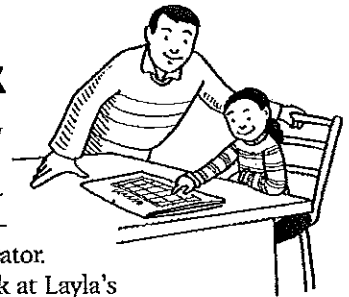
PARENT TO PARENT

Getting started with homework

My daughter's teacher, Mrs. Hernandez, recently began sending home a monthly activity calendar. Layla has to choose 10 assignments from the calendar each month, such as writing her name in a rainbow of colors or searching for shapes in the refrigerator.

I was surprised because I didn't have homework at Layla's age, so I asked Mrs. Hernandez about it. She explained that homework helps little ones remember what they learn at school and encourages them to continue learning at home. She also pointed out that while Layla should do the activities on her own, it's okay for me to help and remind her.

We started by reading the calendar together, and Layla circled the things she wanted to do. I helped her find the supplies she needed and sat with her while she worked. This way, she knows that school is important, and I get to see what she's learning in class. ♥



Q & A Dealing with divorce

Q: My husband and I recently separated, and we're concerned about how the changes will affect our son. Should we bring this up with his teacher?

A: Family changes can be difficult for little ones, as they take comfort in predictable routines. Luckily, there's a lot you can do to help your youngster adjust.

First, it's important to share the news with his teacher so she can look for behavior changes. For example, your son might get frustrated or upset more easily. The teacher may recommend that he talk to

the school counselor about his feelings or join a "support group" for children whose parents are separated or divorced.

At home, try to continue a regular schedule. If possible, keep bedtime and rules the same at both houses. Also, communicate with each other about school. Pass along papers, and try to make sure you both attend school events (conferences, plays). Your son will be comforted knowing that even though you're apart, you're working together to make sure he's happy and successful. ♥

