

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

November 2015



Nordstrom Elementary School
Debbie Grove, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Take good notes

Help your youngster practice note taking with this idea. During a family discussion, appoint him as secretary. Explain that he doesn't have to write every word that's said, and he can use abbreviations and symbols. Instead of "We are going to Katie's chorus concert on Friday at 7 p.m.," he could write, "Katie's chorus Fri @ 7."

Dress for the weather

Your child will enjoy winter recess more—and get more exercise—if she's warm enough. Plan ahead by making sure she has a winter coat, mittens or gloves, a hat, and boots. *Note:* If your family needs assistance getting these items, let the school counselor know, and she may be able to help.

Make your own audio books

Would your youngster like a collection of audio books? Encourage him to record himself reading favorite stories aloud. He can practice using expression by trying a different voice for the narrator and for each character. Then, he'll be able to play back the recordings whenever he wants to listen.

Worth quoting

"The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." *B.B. King*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: When you lose something, why do you always find it in the last place you looked?

A: Because once you find it, you stop looking!



Parent-teacher conference FAQ

Whether this will be your first parent-teacher conference or you've already been to several, these answers to common questions will help you get the most out of your meeting.

Q: What should we expect at a typical conference?

A: The teacher will tell you what your child does well, show you work samples, and go over any problems. She may also explain how she's helping your child and suggest things to try at home. Plus, you can share information about your youngster.

Q: How can I prepare for our meeting?

A: It's helpful to write down questions ahead of time. You could ask about schoolwork, your child's behavior, and how she gets along with others. Also, include anything your youngster wants you to discuss.

Q: My child isn't having problems in school. Do I still need to attend the conference?

A: Yes! A conference lets you talk one-on-one with your youngster's teacher and hear how your child is doing. And



it strengthens your relationship with the teacher so it will be easier to reach out to her in the future.

Q: I'm nervous about going into the school and talking to the teacher. How can I feel more comfortable?

A: Keep in mind that the teacher wants you to be her partner in your child's education. Knowing that you are welcome—and needed—may help you feel confident. Arrive early so you're not rushed, and arrange child care (perhaps swap with another parent) so you can talk without distractions. ♥

Explain your math thinking

"I know that $3 \times 26 = 78$ because 3 quarters = 75 cents, plus 3 more pennies = 78 cents!" When your youngster explains how he solved a math problem, it helps the process become more automatic for him. Encourage him with these ideas.

Talk. Let your child hear you do math out loud when you calculate a tip or estimate how long a car trip will take. He'll discover different ways of solving problems and learn that math thinking is an important part of everyday life.

Listen. When your youngster finishes his math homework, pick a random problem, and ask him to explain how he figured it out. Talking it through will deepen his understanding of math concepts—and it may help him correct any errors or find a more efficient method. ♥



Steps to project success

School is full of projects, from science experiments to social studies reports and more. No matter what kind of project your youngster has, these steps can help him do his best.

1. Pick a topic. Your child will enjoy his project and learn more if his topic interests him. If the teacher assigns a project about the Middle Ages, a Lego fanatic could build a castle to use in his presentation, for instance.

2. Do research. Encourage your youngster to become an expert on his topic, whether he's experimenting with simple machines or researching state history. He should do this by



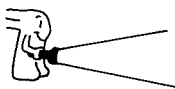
reading various sources, such as nonfiction books, textbook chapters, magazine articles, and websites.

3. Make visuals “pop.”

A bright background in his rain forest diorama or a colorful bar graph on his science project poster will catch his teacher's eye. But visuals must also be neat and accurate—for example, he wouldn't include an elephant in his rain forest.

4. Review and rehearse. Have your child look over his project carefully to make sure he addressed all the requirements. If he has to present it to the class, let him practice in front of you so he'll work out the kinks and feel confident. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



My name, your name

Your child's name is a big part of her identity. Encourage her to explore it with these activities that help her learn about culture, history, and geography:

- Tell your youngster the story of her name—why and how you chose it. Perhaps she is named after a relative or the name is important in your religion. Then, let her look it up in a baby-name book or online.



- Have your child research relatives' and classmates' names. She will discover what the names mean and what countries they're from. Together, find the countries on a map.

- Visit ssa.gov/oact/babynames to see the most popular baby names by year. For example, John and Mary were number one a century ago, while last year it was Noah and Emma. Build thinking skills by asking “Why do certain names become popular?” or “Why do you think Noah and Emma are most common now?” ♥

Q & A In control of fears

Q: I have twin girls. Suddenly, one is scared of storms, and the other is afraid of dogs. What should I do?

A: Fears are normal for kids—typical ones include bugs, the dark, and doctors, as well as storms and dogs. The good news is that most childhood fears go away over time. Try talking to your girls about their fears and coming up with strategies so they feel more in control.

With your daughter who fears storms, discuss ways your family prepares for weather emergencies. Then, let her do a specific task like gathering flashlights and placing one in each room.

You could have your other twin check out library books about dogs. Often, being more knowledgeable about something can make it less frightening.

Note: If either girl's anxiety interferes with sleep or schoolwork, talk to her doctor. ♥



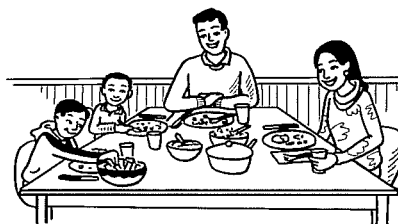
PARENT TO PARENT A bowl full of thanks

As we were discussing our Thanksgiving plans, my son Bradley remembered our tradition of going around the table and saying what we're thankful for. Then he asked a good question: Why do we only talk about being thankful one day a year?

His question led to what we hope will become a new year-round tradition. Once a week before dinner, we each get a slip of paper and write one thing that made us feel thankful

that week, such as a delicious lunch or seeing an old friend. We put the slips in a bowl. Then, we take turns pulling out a slip and reading it aloud—and everyone tries to guess who wrote it.

We have only done this twice so far, but Bradley said that now he regularly thinks about what he's thankful for so he has something to share at dinner. And it's fun to guess why others are thankful! ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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