

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

Working Together for School Success

Hillsboro District #3 - Title I

April 2006

## SHORT NOTES

### Improve concentration

To help your youngster lengthen his attention span, try increasing homework time by a minute or so each day. For example, if he tends to lose focus and takes a break after about three minutes, encourage him to work for four minutes the next day, then five, and so on.

## DID YOU KNOW?

In 2005, fourth-grade students in the United States scored an all-time high on national math assessments. When kids develop strong math skills, they have more career choices as adults, especially in fields like science, engineering, and finance.

Source: National Assessment of Educational Progress, <http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard>

### Emergency prep

Does your child-care provider have an up-to-date emergency contact sheet? Make sure all phone numbers, including the pediatrician's, are current. List your child's medications and any known allergies. Consider providing an emergency medical consent form as well.

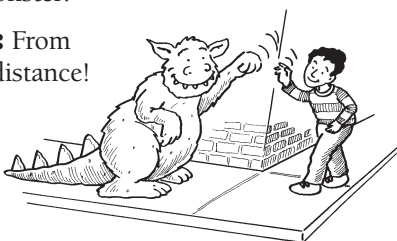
### Worth quoting

"We find comfort among those who agree with us—growth among those who don't." *Frank A. Clark*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What's the best way to talk to a monster?

**A:** From a distance!



## Can-do kids

All parents want their children to grow into capable, independent adults. But how can you help? Try starting small and starting early.

Here are some ways you can build your child's independence skills.

### Encourage responsibility

Expect your child to do as much for himself as he can, according to his age and ability. Even a very young child can make his bed or put his books in his backpack after homework is done. Point out the connection between his actions and the results. *Example:* "Because you cleared the dinner table, we'll have time to read another story tonight." He will see that he has the power to make things happen.

### Foster learning

Becoming independent doesn't always mean doing things by yourself. If your child is struggling to figure something out, like how to repair the wing of a model plane, encourage him to think of where he could find answers. *Examples:* Look for instructions on the Internet? Ask a librarian for a book recommendation? Or maybe talk to your neighbor, the retired pilot? Once your child learns "how to learn," he'll be on the road to self-reliance.

### Provide security

Everyone needs love and security. When your child feels secure, he will be more likely



to explore and branch out on his own. Through new experiences, your youngster will learn new skills—and boost his self-confidence along the way. ♥

## End-of-year conferences

The end of the school year is on its way—and so are parent-teacher conferences. Consider these questions to ask during the conference:

- How do you think my child did this year overall?
- Did she progress academically as you expected her to?
- What are her strengths? How can she continue to build on them?
- What weaknesses have you noticed? Do you have any ideas for ways she can improve?
- What skills will my youngster learn next year? Is there anything she can do at home this summer to be prepared? ♥



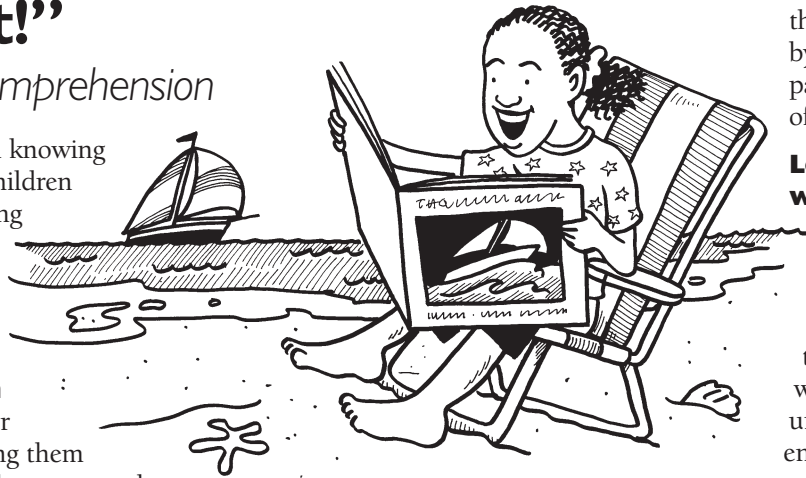
# “Aha! I get it!”

## Boosting reading comprehension

Reading involves more than knowing how to say or spell words—children have to understand the meaning of the text as well. If your child struggles with comprehension, share these strategies with her.

**Say the words silently in your head.** If your youngster tends to skip over words, saying them to herself will help her see and process each one so she won't miss any of the meaning.

**Do one thing at a time.** Encourage your child to ignore everything except what she's reading. Suggest that she look at



the sentences individually by using a blank piece of paper to cover up the rest of the page.

**Look up unfamiliar words.** Learning the meaning of new words will improve your youngster's understanding. Sometimes looking up a single word in the dictionary can unlock the meaning of an entire paragraph.

**Relate reading to real life.** Ask your child if what she has read reminds her of anything she has experienced or learned. Connecting reading content to her everyday life will make the information easier to understand—and remember. ♥

### ACTIVITY CORNER

#### Measuring fun

Want to try a creative math exercise with your child that will sharpen his measuring skills? Start by sharing these fun facts:



- The length of a mile is based on how far a Roman soldier could travel in 1,000 steps.

- A foot is based on the length of the foot of King Henry I, who reigned over England from 1100 to 1135.

- The ancient Egyptians measured distances in cubits, which is the distance between a person's elbow and fingertips.

Next, ask your youngster to create his own unit for measuring. *Examples:* the width of his little finger, the length of his leg. Then, challenge him to use the unit to measure things, such as a friend's height or the width of his bed. ♥

#### OUR PURPOSE

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

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### Q & A Organization tips

**Q:** My child is so disorganized. Her room is drowning in clutter! She loses homework papers, and her library books are always overdue. Any suggestions?

**A:** First, go through everything in your child's room together. Throw out, donate, or put into storage anything she hasn't needed in the last year.

Then, help your youngster reorganize what's left. She might put all her library books on one shelf and her schoolbooks on another. Homework and other assignments could be stacked neatly in individual folders on her desk or in a plastic crate or cardboard box.

Finally, encourage your daughter to choose one day each week to clean out her backpack. And remind her that the best way to stay organized is to spend a few minutes every day putting things in their proper places. ♥



### PARENT TO PARENT

#### Family food makeover

Last year, my husband was diagnosed with type 2 diabetes. His doctor told him that he would have to change his eating habits to stay healthy. For his sake—and because it would be good for all of us—we decided that the whole family would try to eat a healthier diet.

My husband's nutritionist was very helpful. She suggested that we have more



sit-down meals together. It's easier to make balanced meals for everyone that way. She also told us to eat more fresh fruits and vegetables, and foods made with whole grains.

One weekend we went to the library and checked out several cookbooks. We got some recipe ideas that were delicious *and* nutritious. We love our new eating style—and everyone has more energy too! ♥