

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

March 2006

Hillsboro District #3 - Title I

SHORT NOTES



An eye for science

Good scientists notice details. To increase your youngster's observation skills, encourage her to draw pictures of the things she studies in science class. *Examples:* the number of petals on a flower, the shape of crystals under a microscope. Drawing will help her see details that she might otherwise miss.

Real-life heroes

Give your child a real-life hero. Have him search for heroes in your community, such as a teacher who gives extra encouragement or the crossing guard who keeps kids safe. Once your youngster starts looking, he may be surprised by all the real-life heroes he finds around him!

Healthy humor

A few laughs every day can be good for your whole family. Laughing together is a great way to tame tempers and boost everyone's energy. Try sharing a joke over dinner or watching a comedy together—you'll be healthier and happier.

Worth quoting

"When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people." *Abraham Joshua Heschel*

JUST FOR FUN

Tom: Your shirt has holes in it!

Mary: No, it doesn't!

Tom: Then, how did you put it on?



At-home tips for tests

For many schools, spring brings standardized tests. How can your youngster prepare for them? Here are some ways you can give her practice with language arts and math skills now and throughout the year.

Language arts

■ **Vocabulary:** When your child comes across an unfamiliar word, help her guess the meaning from the words around it. Knowing how to look for context clues is a helpful test-taking skill.

■ **Writing:** Suggest that your child write in a journal. Even one paragraph daily will help her write faster and more fluently—important for tests with a time limit!

■ **Comprehension:** When you and your youngster read together, encourage her to summarize the story in her own words. She'll get practice zeroing in on key points and putting events in order.

Math

■ **Word problems:** Help your child find "number" words in word problems. Try underlining any mention of size (how wide, how tall), distance (how far), quantity (how many), and frequency (how many times).

■ **Estimation:** Stretch your child's math sense by encouraging her to make estimations. For example, she can estimate the grocery bill as you shop by rounding the prices and adding them together. Being able to estimate will help her know whether an answer is reasonable and allow her to make smart guesses.

■ **Computation:** Occasionally, time your youngster when she does addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division problems. *Example:* You might give her 10 minutes to do 10 problems. She'll get used to working under pressure. ♥



Spring fever cures

Need a cure for your kids' spring fever? Try these suggestions.

Soak up the sun.

Encourage your youngsters to study by a sunny window or on a porch. The change of scenery will help satisfy their desire to be outdoors.

■ **Get hearts racing.** Let your children run and play outside before starting schoolwork or before school in the morning, if there's time. A little activity will get spring fever wiggles out!

■ **Stick to bedtimes.** It's tempting to let kids stay up later as the days get longer, but keep in mind that most elementary school students need about 10 hours of sleep each night. Getting plenty of rest will help your children keep their minds on schoolwork. ♥

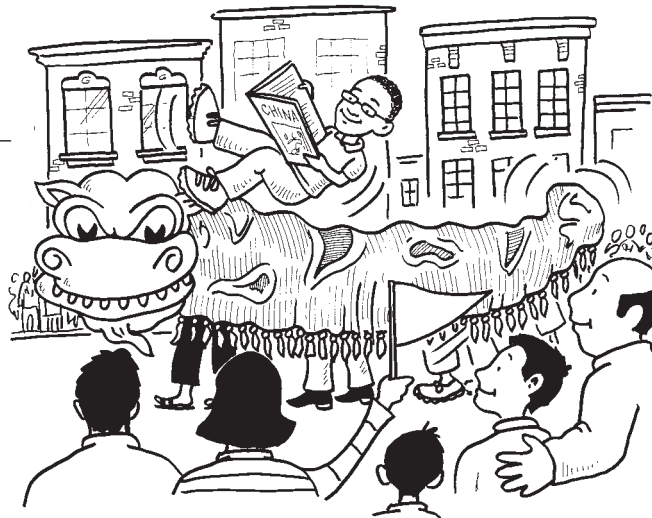


Teaching tolerance

Children's minds are like sponges—they absorb many new ideas as they're growing up. And that makes this a perfect time to teach them about tolerance. You can help your children appreciate cultural differences with these ideas.

Find out more

Talk about other cultures with your youngsters. Together, look up answers to their questions in books or on Web sites. *Example:* "Why do the Chinese have their own New Year?" Your kids will gain a better understanding of different cultures.



Explore family history

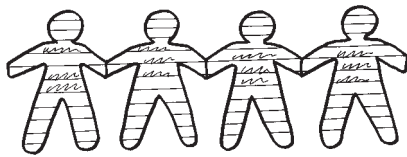
The ancestors of most people born in the United States originally came from other countries. Research your family's genealogy with your kids. Were your family members fleeing persecution? Looking for a better life? The answers can help your youngsters learn why tolerance is important.

Look for similarities

Talk with your children about what all people have in common, such as needing enough to eat and a safe place to live. Looking at how we're all alike, instead of how we're different, will help your family feel more connected to others. ♥

Web pen pals

Did you know that your child can find friends and build skills by being an Internet pen pal? Sharing ideas with someone her age gives her a real reason to write, along with plenty of practice in communication skills.



There are several free online pen pal programs your child could join. Two to consider are Kids' Space Connection at www.ks-connection.org and KidsCom at www.kidscom.com/friends/keypal/keypal.html. Both sites let kids choose their pen pals' age and gender. (Be sure to always monitor your child's online activity.)

If your youngster doesn't seem to know what to write about at first, try brainstorming ideas together. For example, she could ask questions about her pen pal's family or pets, or tell the pen pal about what she is studying in school. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Meet in the middle

My kids frequently clash with each other, as most siblings do. And they often hang on to their angry feelings for hours afterward.

One day, after some really serious squabbles, I drew seven chalk marks in a row on the sidewalk and had John and Amanda stand at opposite ends. On their first mark, I told them to say how they felt. They both said, "I'm mad!" Then, they each moved forward to the next mark, where I asked them to say why. They each told their side of the problem. At the next mark, I asked each of them to offer a solution and agree on a compromise.

Finally, I told John and Amanda they could move to the middle mark by saying three things they like about each other. The kind words melted their angry feelings, and for the first time, they left an argument smiling. ♥



Q & A

"It's only a dollar!"

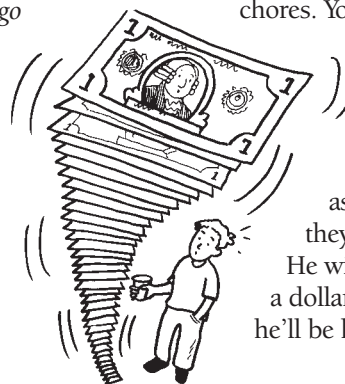
Q: My son constantly asks me to buy him something, like a snack or drink, when we go

places. The items aren't expensive, but how can I help him understand that these purchases add up?

A: You might consider asking your child to work for what he spends. For instance, offer to pay him for

housework or yard work, such as shoveling snow, that goes beyond his usual chores. You could try \$4 per hour, or \$1 for every 15 minutes of work.

Then, the next time your youngster insists on a \$1.39 drink and a \$1.59 bag of chips, ask him to think about whether they're worth 45 minutes of work. He will really understand the value of a dollar if he's earning it himself—and he'll be less likely to want to spend it. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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