

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

November 2011

W.A. Olmsted Elementary School
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SHORT NOTES

Sign your name

Your youngster will sign his name thousands of times in his life. When he learns cursive, encourage him to practice by writing his signature with a variety of colorful pens (felt-tipped, ballpoint, gel). Have him sign cards and notes, or show him your signature on a receipt and let him sign his name on the back.

DID YOU KNOW?

Water “wakes up” the brain. Staying hydrated throughout the day can help your child be alert and think clearly. Suggest that she have a glass of water before school and any time she feels thirsty. Also, remind her to drink from the water fountain during class breaks.

Question jar

Here’s a way for your youngster to practice research skills and learn new facts. If he asks a question you can’t answer, have him write it down. *Example:* “Are orangutans monkeys?” Keep his questions in a jar. When you have time, pull one out and find the answer together. He could check a book or website or call someone who might know.

Worth quoting

“It takes as much energy to wish as it does to plan.” *Eleanor Roosevelt*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: If the Pilgrims were still alive today, what would they be most famous for?

A: Their age!



Forecast: Cooperation

What is the atmosphere like in your house? You can encourage your child to cooperate by creating a pleasant environment in which everyone works as a team and enjoys each other’s company. Try these ideas.

Warm reunions

The first few minutes you and your youngster spend together after school or work can increase your chances for a nice evening. Try joining her while she eats her snack, or color pictures together. The attention from you and the relaxed tone may make her feel more cooperative as she does homework and chores and gets ready for bed.

Nice consequences

Show your youngster that cooperating leaves more time for activities she enjoys. For example, point out that if she helps you with the laundry, you’ll have time for a game or an extra bedtime story. Or tell her that if she entertains her little brother while you pay bills, you’ll finish faster



and will be able to watch her play outdoors.

Gentle requests

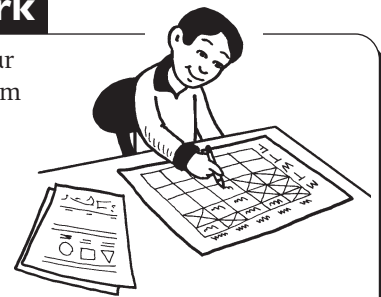
Stay upbeat and seek her input—your child may be more likely to cooperate. Say you find toys covering the living room floor. You can ask, “What’s your plan for tackling cleanup?” Or if you want her to start making her own lunch, you might say, “Where should we keep supplies so you can pack your lunch easily?” ♥

Homework routines that work

Starting a homework routine now can help your youngster develop good habits that will benefit him throughout school. Consider these suggestions.

● **Make a homework chart.** Have your child draw a grid on a sheet of paper with the days down the left side and school subjects across the top. Each day, he can “x” out where he doesn’t have homework. Then, as he finishes an assignment, he can initial the correct box. He’ll have a nice visual reminder of what he has accomplished and what he still needs to do.

● **Review assignments together.** This will give you a chance to see what your youngster is working on and to make sure he finishes his work. *Tip:* You can point out mistakes, but have him correct them on his own so his teacher will be able to see if he needs extra help. ♥



Road science

Cars—both toy and real ones—give your youngster opportunities to learn about force and motion. Spark his interest in science with these experiments.

How much friction?

Friction is created when two objects touch. Have your child gather a toy car and make a ramp by stacking three books and leaning a fourth book against them. Then, give him several different materials to cover the ramp (aluminum foil, construction paper, a bath towel). He can hold each material on the ramp and let the car roll down.

Which does he think will cause the car to travel the shortest distance? *Answer:* the towel, because it is the roughest material and produces the most friction.



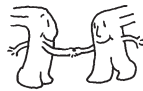
Which direction?

When you're in the car, let your youngster place a ball on the floor and predict which direction it will roll when you turn right. Have him watch the ball closely as you turn. What happens?

He might be surprised to see it roll left! That's because a moving object (the ball, which is moving along with the car) continues in its original direction (straight) until something

stops it. Even though the car turned right, the ball kept going in the direction you were driving—toward the road that is now to your youngster's left. ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



Pass it on

Try this dinner conversation game to sharpen your child's memory and thinking skills.

Begin by having one person finish this sentence: "I have one ____." She should fill in the blank by naming something that she has just one of (nose, bedroom). The next person repeats that item and adds something that she has two of: "I have one bedroom and two earrings."



Continue around the circle and try to get to 10. Add to the fun by being silly or creative ("I have eight legs on a toy spider").

Start over whenever someone forgets one of the objects or can't think of an item to go with the next number. ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Conference tips

Whether your child is doing well in school or struggling, a conference is an important way to touch base with her teacher. Here's how to make the most of your meeting:

- Write down questions for the teacher ahead of time. To come up with your list, think about each subject ("Is Amelia reading at grade level?") as well as social skills and behavior ("Is she making friends?").
- Carry a pen and notepad to take notes during the conference. Write down information to share with your youngster ("The teacher said you help other kids during group work") and ideas for helping her at home ("Board games can teach math facts!").
- Be on time—the teacher will be meeting with many parents, and conferences are usually scheduled back-to-back. Also, consider swapping babysitting with another parent so you can attend without your children. ♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Learning an instrument—and more

This year, our son Nicholas started playing the violin at school. I play piano, so I was thrilled when he expressed an interest in music. I know that learning an instrument can teach a child about patience and hard work—and it can be a fun and satisfying hobby.

At first, Nicholas got discouraged easily when he practiced. He said it didn't sound "like real music." His teacher emphasized that patience is important, and she encouraged us to be

positive, too. She said that we should make comments like, "You're working really hard" or, "I love that part!" She also suggested that we refer to practice as "playing time" and let Nicholas know we'd be happy to listen to him perform anytime.

Her advice has made a difference. Our son has been practicing regularly, and the teacher is pleased with his progress. ♥

