Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

April 2013

Burris Elementary School
Mrs. Stephanie Hardman, School Counselor

SHORT NOTES

Check your work

Your child can do better on assignments by looking over finished work before he hands it in. For instance, he will need to correct misspelled words and make sure that subjects and verbs agree. He should also see that his name is on his paper so he gets credit for his work.

Observation game

Raise a youngster with a sharp eye by playing this game. Put 10 objects (marker, candy, toy car) on a tray. Let your child look at the tray for 5 seconds. While she closes her eyes, remove one item. Can she tell you which one is gone? Then, have her take away an object for you.

Swimming safety

Knowing how to swim will help your youngster stay safer in water—and enjoy it more. As summer nears, consider signing him up for swimming lessons at a recreation or community center. Also, discuss rules like diving in designated areas and not swimming alone.

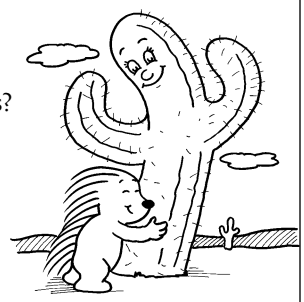
Worth quoting

"Be like a postage stamp. Stick to one thing until you get there."
Josh Billings

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What did the porcupine say to the cactus?

A: "Is that you, Mom?"



A well-rounded reader

Caroline likes picture books and chapter books. Marcus enjoys biographies and sports trivia. And Izzy prefers poems and nursery rhymes. Which kind of book is best for your child?

All of them! Reading a wide variety of materials can prepare her for the novels, textbooks, and poetry she'll encounter in school. Try these ideas.

Talk about stories

When you read aloud to your youngster, give her comprehension a boost by discussing the book. You might ask, "Which character reminds you of yourself?" or "What would this story be like if it took place in the future?" *Tip:* Encourage her to ask you questions, too. Thinking about what to ask will help her reflect on the story and understand it better.

Learn from nonfiction

Keep track of what your family learns from nonfiction. Have your child post a sheet of paper where everyone can list facts they discover along with titles of the book or articles where they found the information. Your youngster might be surprised to see how much nonfiction can teach her!

Act out poems

Making up motions to go with a poem can help your child visualize what it's about. Help her find a book of children's poetry at the library. At home, pick one to act out together. For "I Found a Four-Leaf Clover" (Jack Prelutsky), she could put a four-leaf clover in her pocket, drop a dozen plastic eggs, and look for keys. *Tip:* Let her illustrate poems—drawing pictures can help her visualize their meanings, too.♥

Recycling: Making a difference

Get your youngster in the recycling habit with these tips. He'll learn the importance of doing his part to help the environment:

- Have him make a list of recyclables (bottles, cans, newspaper). He can hang it near the trash can as a reminder of what not to throw away.
- Make conservation fun by letting him step on boxes to flatten them or "shoot baskets" by tossing cans into the recycling bin.
- Explain that recycling one aluminum can saves enough energy to power a computer for 3 hours, and recycling a glass bottle saves enough to light a 100-watt bulb for 4 hours. Then, ask your child to count items in the recycling bin and calculate how much energy your family will save.♥

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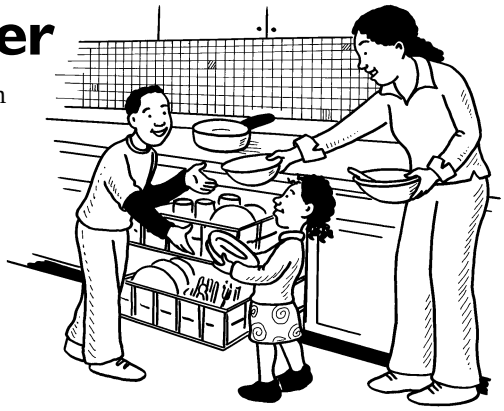
Meals with character



Family meals are full of opportunities to teach your youngster good character traits. Consider these suggestions.

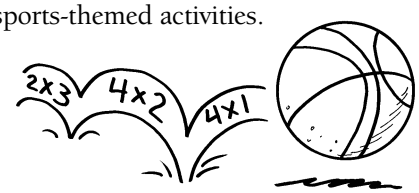
Politeness. The dinner table is an ideal place to work on manners, such as saying "please" and "thank you." You can also teach your child to wait until all family members are seated before he starts eating and to stay at the table until everyone is finished. And have him practice passing food. For example, remind him not to reach across others, and if someone asks for a dish, he should pass it before serving himself.

Thoughtfulness. Encourage your youngster to think of others. If he goes for the last piece of chicken, you might say, "I wonder if anyone else wants more chicken, too. Why don't you ask?" Explain how you consider other people when you cook: "I made carrots because it's your favorite vegetable. Do you remember which one your sister likes best? We could have that tomorrow."

Helpfulness. Let your child take part in preparing, serving, or cleaning up the meal. He could make a salad, set the table, or put dishes in the dishwasher, for example. Ask him why he thinks it's a good idea for everyone to help out (work is shared, your family can spend more time together).♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Sports math

Whether your child is just learning to count or working on multiplication, she can practice math skills with these two sports-themed activities.



1. Hit a tennis ball back and forth, and have your youngster count out loud the number of times until someone misses. If you have an older child, pitch a baseball to her. She can keep track and, after 10 pitches, tell you the fraction she hit. *Example:* If she hit 4, that's $\frac{4}{10}$, or $\frac{2}{5}$.

2. Take turns making up math word problems for each other to solve. Try to think of problems that can have more than one correct answer. For instance, "There were 5 total goals in the soccer game. What could the score have been?" (5-0, 4-1, or 3-2) Or come up with problems that involve multiple operations. You might say, "A basketball player got two 3-pointers, four 2-pointers, and four free throws. How many points did she score?" (2 x 3 = 6, 4 x 2 = 8, and 4 x 1 = 4; 6 + 8 + 4 =18) ♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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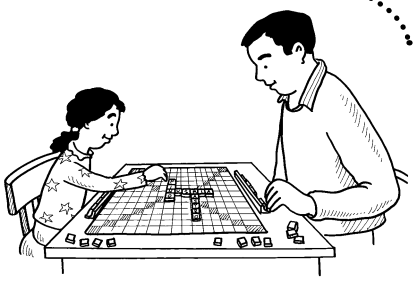
Q & A Becoming bilingual



Q: *I grew up speaking Spanish, but now I speak mostly English at home. How can I help my daughter speak Spanish more fluently?*

A: As you know, there are many benefits to growing up bilingual. Your daughter will be able to talk to more people in our increasingly diverse society. Also, knowing a second language will open the door to more jobs for her in the future.

Try having Spanish-only nights on a regular basis. You could carry on Spanish conversations, play Scrabble in Spanish, or watch a Spanish-language movie. Or you might speak only Spanish at certain times, such as in the car or when you are with Spanish-speaking relatives.

Finally, ask a librarian to help you find Spanish picture books and novels. Reading them and following along in the book together is a good way for your daughter to learn written as well as spoken Spanish.♥

PARENT TO PARENT How to handle shyness

Our kindergartner, Aaron, is pretty shy. We thought by this point in the year he would have more friends and be more comfortable talking to adults. When we talked to his teacher, she made us feel better.

Mrs. Perry said shyness is a personality trait—not a flaw. Focusing on it or pushing our son to be outgoing could actually make him feel more shy. Instead, she said, we can help him handle social situations by easing him into them.

For example, if Aaron isn't ready to go to a friend's house, we might let him invite a classmate to our house or meet another family at a park. When guests visit, we could ask our son occasional questions to draw him into the conversation.

Aaron's teacher also said shyness has its positive points. Kids who are shy are often good listeners and deep thinkers. And they tend to behave well at school because they don't like to call attention to themselves.♥