

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

April 2009

Unified School District #247 - Title I



SHORT NOTES

Inchworm race

Here's a fun way to practice measuring with your youngster. Take turns rolling a die. Using a ruler, make a "worm" out of clay to match the number rolled (*example*: roll a 2, measure 2 inches of clay). Add to the worm on every turn. The player with the longest inchworm after five rolls wins.

Be thoughtful

Teach tolerance and understanding by reminding your child not to use hurtful labels. Ask her to think about the words she says and to imagine how she'd feel if someone called her those names. Encourage her to go a step further and stand up to classmates who speak that way. ("I don't like that word. Please don't use it around me.")

Away from home

Do you have to travel for work? Try to give your youngster as much notice as possible. It may be easier for him to cope with a change if he knows about it ahead of time. Also, establish a regular routine, such as calling to say goodnight at the same time every evening.

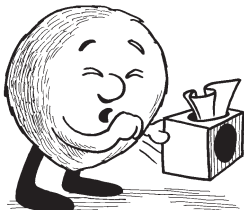
Worth quoting

"A problem is a chance for you to do your best."
Duke Ellington

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What is hairy and coughs?

A: A coconut with a cold!



Adventures with words

Help your youngster build a better vocabulary, and he'll be a better reader, writer, and speller. Try these activities that the whole family can enjoy.

Find fun words

As you're reading, point out interesting words to your child. *Examples*: words that are fun to say like *buzz* and *gigantic*; words with double letters such as *football* and *bookkeeper*. Ask your child to look for words he likes, too. Keep a notepad handy where you both can jot down favorite words. Then, pass the notebook around at dinner and use the words to make up a story together.

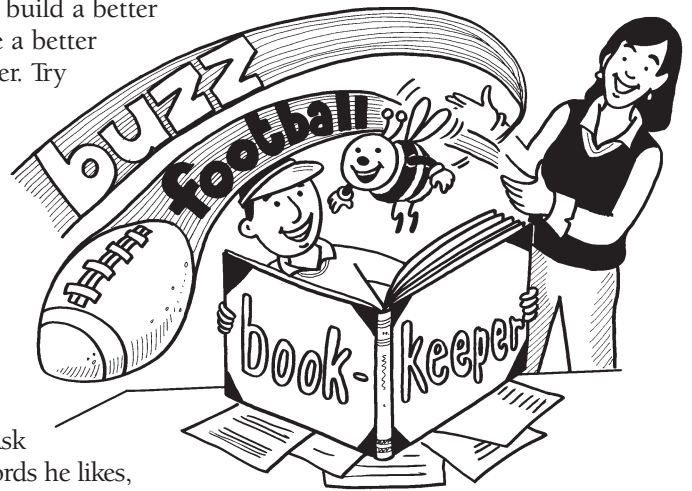
Play word games

Stock up on games like Quiddler, Pictionary, and Word Rummy. (*Tip*: Look at yard sales and thrift shops.) You can also make up your own games. In a restaurant, take turns calling out a word from the menu: the first person says a two-letter word, the next person a three-letter word, and so on. Whoever finds the longest word wins.

Furry friends

Showing compassion for animals can help your youngster learn to be kind to *all* living things. Here are a few ideas:

- Caring for animals can be as simple as spending more time with a family pet. If you don't have one, offer to pet-sit for vacationing friends. Take your child along, and let her help you feed and play with the animal.
- Teach your youngster to be gentle with pets. Show her how to pet an animal on the back instead of on the face. Also, she shouldn't tease or roughhouse with a pet.♥



Use more words

Using a variety of words will help your youngster improve his vocabulary. For example, you might say, "That joke is *hilarious*" instead of, "That joke is *funny*." On car rides or in waiting rooms, start conversations about words. How is *tiny* different from *little*? Talking about words will help your child choose the perfect one when he speaks or writes.

Note: If your youngster is learning English, playing with words is a great way to help him improve his skills.♥



Good consequences

Behaving well and working hard pay off! Help your child see the results of her efforts—you'll find yourself scolding her less often as she learns self-discipline.

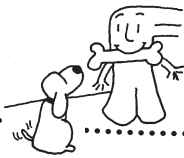
■ Tie good behavior to good consequences. If your youngster is quiet when you're on the phone, you might say, "You were so patient while I made that call. Would you like to play a game now?" Or when she goes to bed without a struggle, point out how energetic she seems the next morning.



■ Recognize success. Maybe you'd like your child's room to be neater. Tell her that if she keeps it clean for a month, you'll help her rearrange or redecorate it. By that time, picking up will probably be a habit. And she'll enjoy her room so much that she'll be motivated to keep it that way.

Tip: Try not to use rewards like toys or food. You'll train your youngster to expect something in exchange for behaving well. Plus, offering food as a reward can lead to unhealthy eating habits.♥

PARENT TO PARENT



Be our guest

My daughter's class celebrated Dr. Seuss's birthday in March by inviting guest readers into the classroom. A local college football player, our mayor, and the town's oldest resident all read Dr. Seuss books to the students.

That gave me an idea. Since I work full-time and can't regularly visit her class, I offered to help recruit other volunteers. Now I arrange for a guest to go in each week. Depending on what the teacher wants, the visitor might read to the whole class or take turns reading with individual kids.



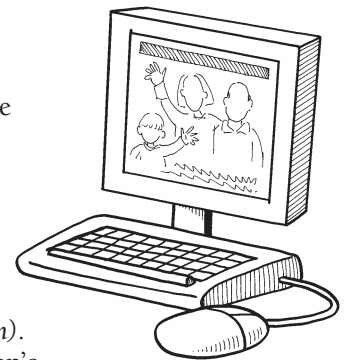
I've already recruited several guests, including a high school drama teacher and a local author. The teacher loves these visitors because they're good role models for the kids—and she gets an extra pair of hands in the classroom.♥

Family networking

Did you know that more families are joining online communities to stay in touch with friends and relatives? You can, too. Let your child take the lead on this project, and he'll build computer skills and practice reading and writing.

First, help him find a safe social-networking Web site to use—one with privacy controls (try <http://famiva.com>, www.famster.com, or www.glubble.com). Have him set up your family's profile with each person's name and birthday. He could add family members' favorite hobbies and movies and also upload family photos and write captions. Together, send an e-mail to family and friends inviting them to join your network.

Then, encourage your youngster to start exploring the network. For example, he might build his vocabulary by doing word puzzles or practice strategy by playing chess with a cousin in another city. Or he could boost his reading comprehension and writing skills by posting a review of a book he has read.♥



Q & A Help the environment

Q: We recycle and try not to waste electricity. What else can I do to teach my son about the environment?

A: Earth Day is coming up on April 22. Why not use the occasion to get your son interested in protecting the environment all year long?

For example, whenever possible, you might walk or ride bikes—say, to visit a neighbor or run a short errand—instead of driving.

When you're shopping, point out the recycled symbol to your child. Ask

him to help you find items with the symbol. You might pick up recycled brands of computer paper, detergent containers, and paper towels.

Consider "adopting" a street in your neighborhood or an area in a nearby park to clean up regularly. Put on old clothes and gloves, grab a few trash bags, and pick up litter. *Tip:* Put recyclable items (aluminum cans, plastic, glass) in a separate bag. Take them to a recycling center, or set them out with your curbside recycling.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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