

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

Working Together for School Success

January 2009

Unified School District #247 - Title I



## SHORT NOTES

### Touch base

Parents often contact teachers when they're concerned about their children. But teachers want to hear from you when everything's going well, too. Send a quick note about something your child enjoyed (a field trip, a history unit). When communication becomes a habit, it will be easier to chat if a concern crops up.

### Chore balloons

Motivate your youngster to help around the house by turning chore assignments into a game. Write tasks on balloons (vacuum, dust, mop). Then, set a timer for one minute while you bat the balloons around to each other. When the buzzer sounds, catch a balloon—and do that chore.

### Snowman spelling

Improve your child's spelling with this "chilly" version of Hangman. First, use a pencil to draw a snowman on paper. Then, think of a word and write one blank per letter. Ask your youngster to guess the letters one by one. For each incorrect guess, erase one part of the snowman (head, hat, nose). Can she figure out your word before he "melts"?

### Worth quoting

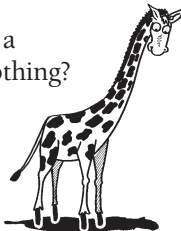
"It's nice to be important, but it's more important to be nice."

*Anonymous*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What's as big as a giraffe but weighs nothing?

**A:** A giraffe's shadow.



## Prevent bullying

Bullying is more than hitting or shoving—it's also using words to make threats, put other children down, or leave kids out. Help your youngster deal with different kinds of bullying with these suggestions.

### Situation #1:

*Your child complains that she isn't popular—the "in crowd" won't let her sit at their lunch table.*

Although you can't make the students include your youngster, you can build her self-esteem and show her how to make friends with kids who will treat her nicely.

Encourage her to talk to friendly classmates and avoid those who are mean or exclude others. Help her gain confidence by finding friends who share her interests (music, pets) and inviting them over to play.

### Situation #2:

*A classmate has been making fun of your youngster and calling her names.*

Bullies who tease may be hoping for a reaction. If they get one, they may tease even more.

The best response is to speak confidently and walk away. For instance, your child might say, "You shouldn't talk to people like that." Then, she should join a group of friends or approach an adult.

*Note:* Always listen to your youngster if she tells you she's being bullied. Assume she's

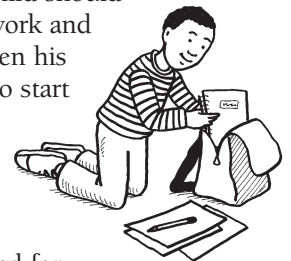


being honest, and assure her she is not tattling. Talk to her teacher and guidance counselor so they can help handle the situation.♥

## Resolving to do your best

A new year is the perfect opportunity for your youngster to put his best foot forward. Share these ideas, and watch him shine:

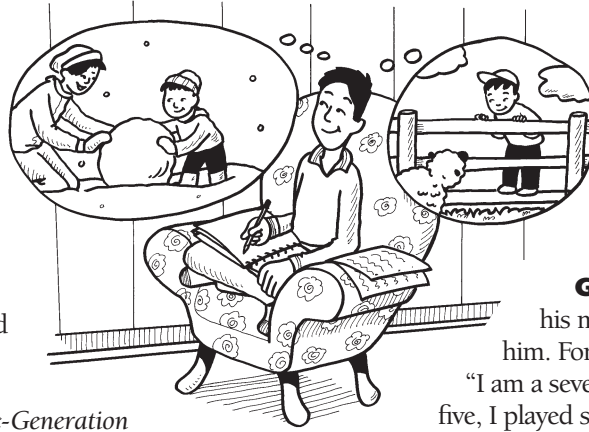
- Be prepared. Your child should take completed homework and books to school, sharpen his pencils, and be ready to start working.
- Look over work carefully. Encourage him to double-check arithmetic and proofread for misspelled words and careless errors on classwork and quizzes.
- Attempt bonus or extra-credit questions on worksheets or tests. A few points here and there can really add up!
- Add flair to projects. Your youngster can put graphics, photographs, or drawings on a poster. Or he could insert a poem or a quote into a report.♥



# My memoir

Everyone has a story to tell. Encourage your child to practice his writing skills by telling about his life in his very own memoir.

**Read examples.** Show your youngster what a memoir is. Read *When I Was Little: A Four-Year-Old's Memoir of Her Youth* (Jamie Lee Curtis) or *Childtimes: A Three-Generation Memoir* (Eloise Greenfield and Lessie Jones Little). Talk about what's included, such as facts about the writer's family and important events in her life.



**Gather memories.** Help your child make a "memory chart." He can divide a sheet of paper into three columns for people (family, friends, teachers), places (home, school, vacation spots), and activities (scouts, sports, games).

**Get started.** Using the chart, he can begin his memoir with something that's important to him. For instance, he might choose soccer and write, "I am a seven-year-old soccer player," or, "When I was five, I played soccer for the first time."

**Organize information.** Talk about ways your youngster might present his information. For example, he could write about events in the order they happened. Or he might divide his memoir into chapters about different parts of his life (school, summer break).♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER



### All bundled up

Astronauts use it in their spacesuits. It's in the walls of our houses. It keeps us warm, and it keeps us cool, too. What is it? Insulation!

Let your youngster try this science experiment to see which materials make the best insulators.

**You'll need:** ice cubes, wool hat, cotton sock, aluminum foil, plastic wrap



Ask your child to hold an ice cube in her bare hand for a few seconds—she'll see how cold it feels. Then, have her wrap one cube in each of the different materials.

She can set them all on a tray and see which one keeps the ice frozen the longest. Let her use a watch or clock with a second hand to record how long it takes for each one to melt.

Which insulator works best? *Answer:* Wool, because it traps the most air. Air itself is a good insulator, providing another layer of protection that keeps heat from moving out of an object.♥

## Q & A

### Being honest

**Q:** My daughter told me she was visiting her friend next door. But I found out she really went down the block. What should I do?

**A:** First, explain that her decision could have put her in danger. You didn't know where she was, and she went farther than she was allowed to go.

Then, talk to her about the consequences of not telling the truth. Let her know that you may find it harder to believe her next time. You might have to question her more closely or not let her go to her friend's house alone until you feel you can trust her again.

*Note:* Whenever possible, praise your child for being honest. For example, if she admits to breaking a picture frame, say, "Thank you for telling me the truth. I know that was hard."♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Family show-and-tell

My son's class has show-and-tell the last day of each month. Owen looks forward to it so much that we decided to have our own family show-and-tell every Friday evening. We talked about things we might share, and I suggested that Owen show us his schoolwork or talk about his hobbies.

So far, he has shown paintings he made in art,

demonstrated karate moves, and displayed a model airplane he built. I've shared items I'm knitting and projects I've done at work. And just like in school, we make nice comments about the things each person shares.

I think family show-and-tell has helped us get to know each other a little better. Plus, it's great practice for when my son gets up in class to talk about something he has brought.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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