

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

April 2008

Middlesex Elementary School
Dr. Susan Smith, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Picture this

Good readers form mental pictures as they read. To improve your child's comprehension, read a book without letting him see it. Then, ask him to guess what the illustrations look like. *Examples:* How are the characters dressed? Is the setting bright or gloomy?

Asthma awareness

Did you know that many Olympic athletes have asthma? If your youngster has it, she can stay active by learning to watch for triggers (weather changes, allergens) and symptoms (wheezing, coughing, chest tightness). Also, she should alert her teacher or coach right away if she feels an attack coming on.

Dictionary tip

Help your child learn to use the dictionary by showing him the guide words at the top of each page. Explain that every word on the page falls between those two words in ABC order. *Idea:* Have him think of guide words for family members' names (*acorn* and *apple* for *Adam*).

Worth quoting

"Life doesn't require that we be the best, only that we try our best."
H. Jackson Brown Jr.

JUST FOR FUN

Nina: I'm glad I wasn't born in France.

Molly: Why?

Nina: Because I can't speak French!



My sibling, my friend

In a perfect world, siblings are live-in playmates and lifelong friends. In the real world, though, things don't always go so smoothly. How can you help your children get along well and be close buddies? Here are a few strategies.

Calm times

Hectic school days can be a prime time for arguments. Suggest calming activities in the evening after homework and chores.

Examples: crosswords and other puzzles, clay, Legos, magazines. Relaxing and having fun together can build common interests.

Careful words

When correcting your youngsters, address each one separately—lumping them together may encourage resentment. Instead of, "Kids, stop throwing candy in the shopping cart," say, "Laura, we aren't buying chocolate today," or "David, put the lollipops back."

Supportive acts

Next time you attend one child's game or recital, take your other youngster along. It will help them develop respect for one another and appreciate each other's skills. Plus, you'll enjoy a fun outing together.



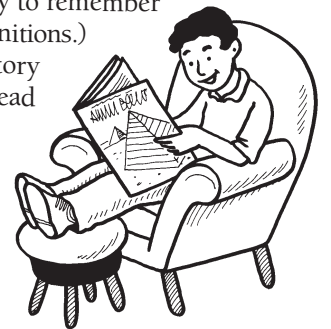
Helping hands

Work as a family to help others. Call your local United Way for ideas. You might sort clothing at a thrift shop, join in a fund-raiser walk, or bake cookies for a shelter. The good feeling that comes from lending a hand is something positive your children can share. ♥

Building on strengths

Everyone has talents...as well as things they struggle with. Try these steps to help your youngster discover his gifts and use them to do better in other areas:

1. Talk with your child about what he is good at (drawing, history). Then, ask him where he needs to improve (vocabulary, reading).
2. Try pairing strengths and weaknesses. For example, how could he use his artistic ability to remember words? (Draw pictures of definitions.) How might his interest in history help him be a better reader? (Read books about history.)
3. Put ideas into action. Give your youngster art supplies when he's studying vocabulary. Ask your librarian for historical fiction books he can read. ♥

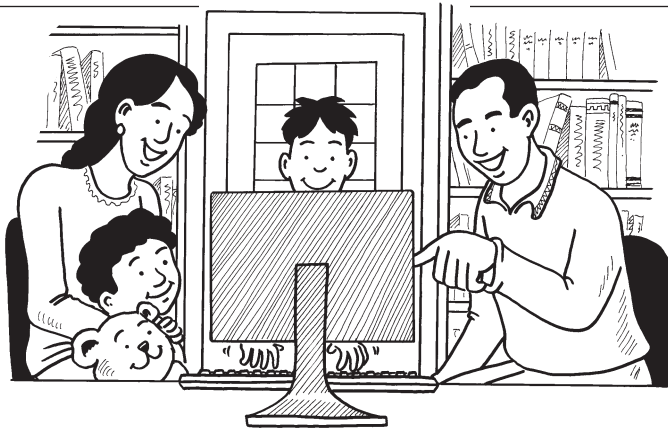


Computer adventures

How can your family take a field trip, write to relatives, and find out what's happening around the world—all without getting out of your chairs?

Gather everyone around the computer, and you'll find out. Get started with these activities.

Visit a museum. Many museums have Web sites with games, puzzles, and other educational activities. For example, explore art at the Metropolitan Museum (www.metmuseum.org/explore/justforfun.asp) or science at the Science Museum of Minnesota (www.smm.org/explore).



E-mail a relative. Each person can type a paragraph letting an aunt, an uncle, or a cousin know what's going on in your family. Your youngsters will practice writing a friendly letter and build typing skills, too.

Read the news. Help your children learn about current events by browsing kids' news sites. For instance, www.scholastic.com/kids includes the latest headlines, special reports, and entertainment news. Others to try: www.weeklyreader.com/index.asp or www.timeforkids.com/TFK/kids.

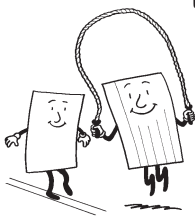
Tip: If you don't own a computer, you can use one at the public library.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER Playground fitness

The next time you take your child to the playground, add more fitness to her fun with this game.

Together, brainstorm ideas for playground exercises in four categories: strength, stamina, balance, and flexibility. Write each one on a separate index card, using a different color card for each type of workout:



- Strength (blue): cross the monkey bars in both directions.

- Stamina (yellow): jump rope for one minute.

- Balance (pink): walk across a beam forward and backward.

- Flexibility (white): do five somersaults on the grass.

Have your youngster draw cards until she has done at least one activity from every color card.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A

Parent-teacher teamwork

Q: My son Jimmy gets good grades on tests and quizzes, but his report card had some low marks because of missed or incomplete assignments. What should I do?

A: Schedule a meeting with your child's teacher to discuss the problem. You can ask for help in setting up a system to make sure Jimmy completes his work.

For example, you might get your son his own "agenda book" (a spiral notebook). Have him write down each assignment as it is given, and you and the teacher can initial the list every day. Then, check with Jimmy in the evenings to make sure that everything is done.

If your youngster doesn't finish classwork, see if his teacher will send it home. The extra homework just might motivate him to complete assignments in school.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Thinking games

Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"



My daughter came up with a game she named "Three Favorites." Someone picks a category (outfits, movies), and everyone tells their top three choices. My son thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items (owl, ostrich, eagle) and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out (ostrich, because it doesn't fly).

Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and I've noticed they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas.♥