

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

March 2008

Middlesex Elementary School
Dr. Susan Smith, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Mind boggler

Tease your child's brain with this logic-building activity. Put three paper cups in a row. Turn the center cup upside down. Can he get all three upside down in exactly three moves? *Hint:* He must flip two cups at a time.

Good language for all

Youngsters sometimes experiment with bad language to get attention and express anger. Consider making a "nice language" rule that applies to children *and* adults. If you say a bad word, admit your mistake: "I should have used a different word—like 'Ouch!' I'm sorry."

Find the source

Which continents produce the things you buy? Your youngster can learn continent names and locations as she discovers the answers. Read clothing, food, and game labels. Help your child find each product's source on a globe. *Examples:* pajamas from Indonesia (Asia), grapes from California (North America).

Worth quoting

"Books, to the reading child, are so much more than books—they are dreams and knowledge, they are a future, and a past." *Esther Meynell*

JUST FOR FUN

Child: If I bought 10 pounds of sugar at 45 cents a pound, how much would it cost?

Cashier: \$4.50. I'll ring it up.

Child: Oh, I don't want to buy any. That was my math homework—thanks for the answer!



Join the club!

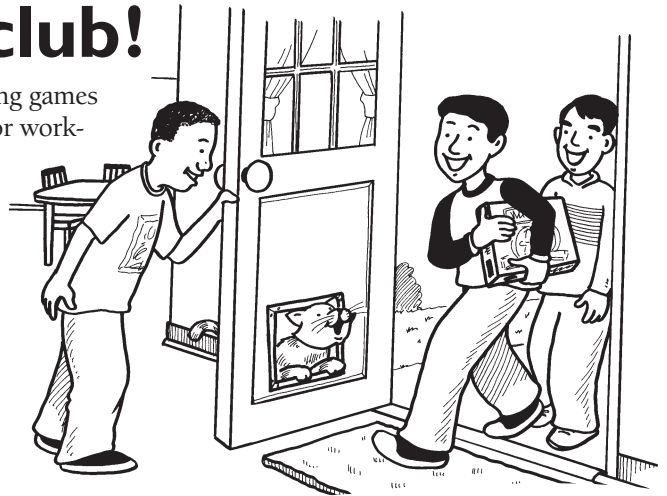
Imagine your child playing games with friends to learn math or working together on a spelling scrapbook. By forming a club based on a favorite school subject, they can enjoy fun projects—and boost their learning. Try these ideas.

Get organized

Have your youngster think of friends who would be interested in joining a club. Talk to their parents about the idea. Then, pick a time that works for everyone (first Monday of each month, every other Wednesday), and take turns hosting. If the club grows larger, try gathering at a park or community center, with a parent chaperone.

Plan activities

- A math club could play games. Youngsters will get hands-on addition and subtraction practice when they buy and sell property in Monopoly. Or they can work on strategy as they move pieces around the Backgammon board.
- Book club members might make trading cards of favorite characters (they can use poster board cut into small rectangles). Watch their comprehension improve as they read for details to write on their cards.
- A spelling club could put together a scrapbook. Have them clip pictures of their spelling words from magazines to tape or glue



onto the pages. Then, they can write the words underneath with markers.

Idea: Help kids celebrate the end of the year with a special event. A science club might visit a planetarium or hike a nature trail. A book club may enjoy seeing a movie based on a book they've read. ♥

Stop bullying

You might picture a bully as someone who beats up other kids. But teasing and excluding others count as bullying, too. What can you do if your youngster is acting this way?

Start by explaining that what she's doing is bullying, and it's wrong. Ask her if other classmates are being mean. She may be following along because she lacks confidence. Try boosting her self-esteem with activities like Girl Scouts or swimming lessons.

You can tell your child that you know it takes courage to stand up to classmates. Suggest that she set an example by asking a bullied child to play at recess.

Note: Call or meet with your youngster's teacher or guidance counselor to discuss other steps. ♥

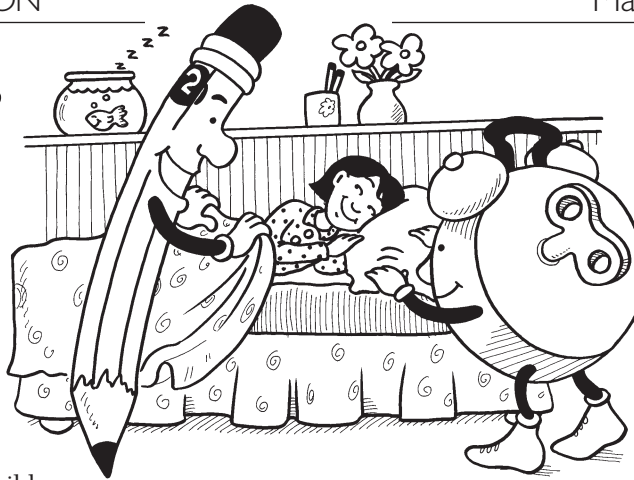


Standardized tests

Choose to do well

True or false: standardized tests are tough. The answer depends on how prepared your youngster is. Here are four ways to help her handle test week:

1. Explain that the tests will show how much she has learned. Encourage her to try her best, but don't put so much emphasis on them that she feels stressed.
2. Practice the test format. For example, your child might have to read a paragraph and answer questions. Using one of her textbooks, have her look at the questions at the end of a section first and then read the passage. That will help her



know what to read for and how to find the answers.

3. Limit activities the night before tests. You may want to avoid having guests for dinner or skip her brother's baseball game if it means being out late.

Be sure your child gets to bed on time and sets an alarm for the next morning.

4. On test day, give her an energy-boosting breakfast. Try to include both protein (eggs, yogurt, milk) and carbohydrates (fruit, oatmeal, toast).♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Moldy science

Mold might not be pretty—but it can help your youngster practice science skills like setting up experiments and gathering and analyzing data. Here's how.

Set up. Give your child four slices of bread. Have him sprinkle two slices with water and leave two dry. Then he can seal each one in a separate zipper bag and label it "wet" or "dry." Two bags (one wet, one dry) should go on the counter and two in a dark cabinet.

Record data. Over the next few days, your young scientist can watch the bread

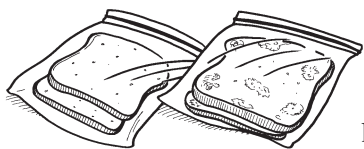
for blue, green, or black mold patches.

Have him

use crayons to draw what he sees each day.

Look for results. Since mold thrives in cool, damp places, it will grow fastest on the wet slice in the dark cupboard.

Note: Tell your child that mold is important because it's used to make penicillin.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Fix it!

When we bought shelves for our son's room, Matt was excited and wanted to help assemble them. I decided he was old enough to read instructions and use basic tools, so I said, "Sure!"

I explained each step, and I let him do as much as possible. For example, he looked over the illustrated list of parts and matched up the pieces before we started. I had him watch me put in a few screws, and then I let him turn the screwdriver himself.

Now Matt wants to fix everything in our house. I've started giving him small jobs he can do on his own. Just last week he used wood glue to repair a picture frame. I think he's learning to be more self-sufficient—and we're enjoying the extra pair of hands!♥



Q & A

Journal writing

Q: My daughter Katie has to write in a journal for homework, and she's in a rut. Every entry begins, "Today I went to school..." How can I help her add variety?

A: Since journal entries are often about something that happened that day, it's easy to get stuck. Teach Katie to look for the small things that make each day different.

For example, if you spot a rainbow, say, "Look at the

beautiful colors! Why don't you write about that in your journal?"

Also, try suggesting that she draw a line down the center of a journal page. On the left, she can write what happened: "We saw a rainbow." On the right, she can express her thoughts about it: "Where does a rainbow begin and end? I wonder if my dad saw it from his office."♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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