

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

May 2008

Middlesex Elementary School
Dr. Susan Smith, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Going for gold

The Summer Olympics (August 8–24) provide many opportunities for learning. Find a library book about the games, such as *Olympics!* by B. G. Hennessy. Suggest that your youngster make a chart to track how many gold, silver, and bronze medals each country wins.

Say yes, too

Do you find yourself automatically saying “no” to your youngster? Instead, take a minute to think about alternatives. For example, maybe he can see a movie on a weekday—if he finishes his homework first. Saying yes, as well as no, shows your child that you’re considering his feelings.

Ready for middle school

Help your rising middle schooler feel confident about changing schools. Have her attend orientation sessions and, if possible, visit her new building for a band concert, a play, or just a walk-through. Also, buy a combination lock for her locker so she can practice working it.

Worth quoting

“A joy that’s shared is a joy made double.”

Anonymous

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn’t have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Fun in a box

How much fun—and learning—can you squeeze into a shoe box? You might be surprised!

Your child can keep skills sharp with activities sized just right for storing at home or taking on vacation. Just gather a few empty shoe boxes, and try ideas like these.

Story writing

Materials: pages pulled from old magazines, scissors, glue, blank paper, pencil

Skills: writing, creative thinking

Activities: Your youngster can cut and paste pictures from travel ads and write about a new tourist spot (*water park + underground caverns = underground water park*). Or he might choose a picture and five interesting words from an article, glue the picture on paper, and use the words to make up a new story.

Word making

Materials: two sets of letters (use magnetic alphabets, or cut a file folder into 52 squares and write a letter on each)

Skills: spelling, vocabulary

Activities: Suggest that your child arrange letters to spell a summer word (*playground, lifeguard*) or copy a word from a sign (*restaurant, expressway*). Then, he can move the letters around to form as many smaller words as possible.

Math games

Materials: playing cards (remove aces and picture cards), slips of paper with plus and minus signs

Skills: addition, subtraction, multiplication



Activities: Encourage your youngster to make addition number sentences out of the cards ($5 + 3 = 8$). Then, he can flip them into subtraction number sentences ($8 - 3 = 5$). Or have him draw two cards and multiply the numbers together. ♥

Teacher appreciation

Looking for a special way to thank your youngster’s teacher for a great year? Here are a few suggestions:

■ Take a picture of the class and frame it. Let your child decorate the frame with her teacher’s name in metallic marker.

■ Donate an item to the classroom, such as a jigsaw puzzle, a dictionary, or an educational game (Boggle, Uno).

■ Help your youngster nominate the teacher for an award. Find suggestions at www.teacherscount.org/teacher/awards.shtml#general.

■ Get a clipboard, and have your child personalize it with glitter glue. She can write the teacher’s name and the message “You make our school sparkle!” ♥



Exploring on a budget

Exploring your community doesn't have to cost a lot, yet the rewards can be priceless. You will teach your child about the world around her and enjoy time together. Consider these activities.



Join in

Call your local parks department to find free or low-cost programs your family can participate in. You might learn to identify birds and flowers during a nature hike, try a craft like tie-dyeing, or take part in a parent-child soccer clinic.

On the farm

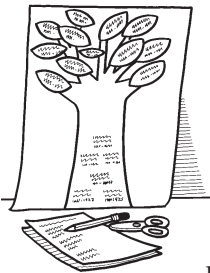
Find a nearby farm where you can pick fruit like strawberries, blueberries, blackberries, or peaches. Once you get home, try making juices, pies, and salsas. Visit www.pickyourown.org for a list of local farms, directions for canning fruit, and recipes.

Batter up

Attend hometown sporting events (check your newspaper for schedules). Youth leagues usually don't charge admission, colleges might ask only a small fee, and minor league games may be free if your young athlete wears her team jersey. Show your child how officials keep score, and point out examples of good sportsmanship.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Family tree

Give your youngster a history lesson by helping him make a family tree. He'll learn how people are related and also practice collecting information from the past.



He can start by calling or e-mailing relatives to ask their full names and birth dates. On poster board, have him draw a tree trunk and branches outlined in brown crayon. Then, he can cut leaves out of

green construction paper and put a name and birth date on each one.

Suggest that he write the oldest generation (example: his great-grandparents) on the trunk and glue the leaves on the branches. Explain that the generations move up the tree, with the youngest ones (your child, his siblings, and his cousins) at the top.

When he's finished, post the tree on his bedroom door. He'll enjoy sharing it when relatives visit!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Learning to be patient

At the library recently, we couldn't find the book my son Roshan wanted. He became upset and asked to go to the bookstore to buy it.

I realized that instant access to everything, from computer game downloads to recorded TV shows, wasn't teaching my child patience. So rather than buying the book, I asked the librarian to reserve it. When she said it would be there in four days, I helped Roshan choose four other books—one for each day he had to wait. By the time we finished the fourth one, his book was in.

I think waiting taught Roshan a lesson in patience. Just the other day he asked when the pool would open. When I told him a week, he said, "That's just seven books away!"♥



Q & A Sleepover savvy

Q: My daughter's friends have started talking about sleepovers.

How do I know if she's old enough?

A: Sleepovers can strengthen friendships and promote independence. On the other hand, they can be stressful if your child isn't ready.

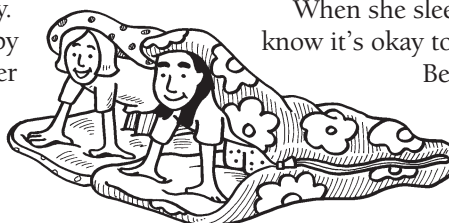
You might begin by letting your youngster host a sleepover. Suggest several ideas to get the evening started. The

girls might order pizza, watch movies, and braid each other's hair.

Then, if she hasn't already, let your child stay someplace familiar—her grandparents' house, for example. If she does well, she may be ready to spend the night at a friend's house.

When she sleeps out, let the parents know it's okay to call if she's homesick.

Be ready to pick her up if necessary, and tell her she can try again another time.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of Aspen Publishers, Inc.
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5621