

# Home & School

## CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

November 2008

Middlesex Elementary School  
Dr. Susan Smith, Principal

### SHORT NOTES



#### Music mix

Introduce your child to a variety of music by listening to different radio stations in the car or at home. Try rock, country, classical, big band, and Latin. Ask him to keep a list of the station numbers and the music they play. What kind of music does he like best?

#### Homework plan

If your youngster struggles to complete homework on time, consider writing out a homework contract together. Spell out the details, such as when and where she will work. Have her agree to check off her assignments each evening and turn them in to her teacher every morning.

#### Watch for the blues

Did you know that children can suffer from depression? One red flag is a loss of interest in play. Other signs include being tearful and grouchy, changes in eating and sleeping, low energy, and worrying about death. If you notice these symptoms, talk to your youngster's doctor right away.

#### Worth quoting

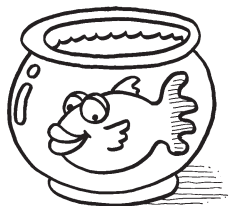
"If you can't make a mistake, you can't make anything."

Marva Collins

### JUST FOR FUN

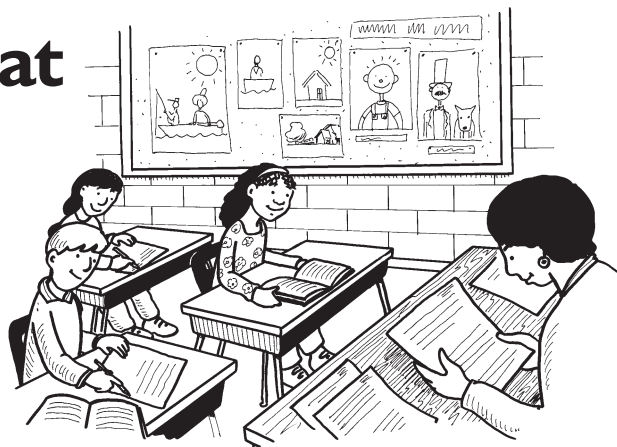
**Q:** Which fish is the richest?

**A:** A goldfish.



## Behaving at school

When kids behave well at school, they have more opportunities for learning. They also show respect for their teachers and classmates by following the rules. Encourage good behavior at school with these suggestions.



#### Communication

Talk to your youngster's teacher. Ask if there are rules your child struggles with (working quietly, keeping hands to herself). Together, come up with ideas for improvement. Then, mark your calendar to follow up with the teacher by phone or e-mail. *Note:* Fall parent-teacher conferences are an ideal time to find out about your youngster's behavior in school.

#### Practice

Being consistent at home will help your youngster follow rules at school. If she leaves the kitchen table without being excused, you might say, "Our rule at home is that we stay at the table until dinner

ends. What's the rule for staying seated at school?" Or remind her that she's working on keeping her classroom desk neater, and have her practice by straightening her room more often at home.

#### Teamwork

Show your child that you and her teacher are a team. If you are confused by classroom discipline, contact the teacher rather than questioning her judgment to your youngster. For example, if your child is kept in at recess but says she "didn't do anything," ask the teacher what happened. Then, talk with your youngster about her behavior and the importance of respecting her teacher's decisions. ♥

## Daily multiplication

Multiplication can be twice the fun with a little daily practice. Try these ideas:

● Have your youngster toss a die and multiply the number rolled (say, 2) by the date (the 6th). He can write the number sentence in a notebook ( $2 \times 6 = 12$ ). At the end of the month, look back to see which day had the highest answer.

● Pick a "cleanup number" (1–10), and have your child group his toys into sets of that number before putting them away. For example, if the number is 3, he can group his action figures into 3s. Ask him to count the groups and figure out the total (4 groups of 3 = 12 action figures). ♥



# Learning from collections

Children are natural collectors. Some collect snow globes or seashells, and others love baseball cards or miniature dinosaurs. Here are three ways to use your child's favorite items to improve his reading, writing, and research skills:



**1.** Encourage him to learn more. Visit the library to check out books—he'll practice reading for information. For instance, a shell collector might read *What Lives in a Shell?* (Kathleen Weidner Zoehfeld). Or take an outing for some hands-on research. You might visit a coin shop or a sports memorabilia store.

the items and put them in an album. He can place a mailing label below each photo and write a caption.

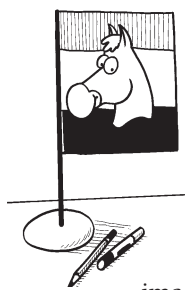
**2.** Clear a bookshelf or tabletop for your youngster to display his items. He can practice writing by making a small sign for each one. Let him use an index card folded in half ("The tyrannosaurus rex was a large, meat-eating dinosaur").

**3.** Suggest that your child keep track of the collection. He might make an alphabetical list in a file folder. Or have him take pictures of the items and put them in an album. He can place a mailing label below each photo and write a caption.

*Idea:* Let your youngster share his collection by having friends or relatives over for a "grand opening."♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Create a country



Encourage your child to invent a new country and design a flag for it. She'll build imagination and learn that each land has traditions that make it special.

For example, her imaginary country could be an island full of horse lovers. Perhaps the residents ride horses instead of driving cars, and they celebrate the animals' birthdays with gifts and cakes. Ask her to name the island and tell you about its language, sports, and foods.

Give your youngster poster board to create the flag. Explain that a flag makes a statement about its country. America's, for instance, has 50 stars to represent 50 states. She might get ideas by looking up world flags at the library or online (try [www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0201477.html](http://www.infoplease.com/ipa/A0201477.html)). Maybe her flag will have a stable, a saddle, or a picture of a horse.♥



## Q & A

### Report writing

**Q:** My daughter is starting her first report. She picked a topic—figure-skating champions—and chose some library books, but there's so much information. Where should she start?

**A:** Finding good information begins with asking the right questions. Have your youngster think of facts she'd like to know about figure skating. Help her write each idea as a question: "What competitions do skaters participate in?" "How do champions practice?" Remind her that the best questions can't be answered with just "yes" or "no."

Then, your child can jot down the answer to each question as she goes. To make sure the information is accurate, she should find two sources for each answer.

When she's ready to write her report, encourage her to choose the most interesting fact and turn it into the first sentence ("Some of the most famous figure skaters started skating when they were six or seven years old").♥

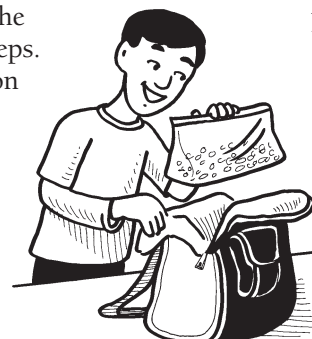


## PARENT TO PARENT

### I did it myself!

We visited my sister recently, and I was surprised by how independent her children seemed. She said that when she wants them to take on something new, she breaks the task into three steps.

For example, when her son was old enough to walk to school, they first discussed safety rules. Then, she walked with him for several days. Finally, he was ready to walk with friends.



I decided to try it. I told my child he was old enough to pack his own school snacks. Our first step was to write a snack menu. Second, he placed snacks into zipper bags. And third, I reminded him for a few days to put the snack in his backpack.

Matt was so proud of himself that he decided to start making his own breakfast, too!♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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