

Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2008

Middlesex Elementary School
Dr. Susan Smith, Principal

SHORT NOTES



No more nagging!

If you're tired of repeating yourself to your youngster, try this. Write your most frequent requests ("Put away your shoes," "Turn down the music") on paper slips, and store them in a cup. The next time your child leaves his shoes out, hand him a note instead of saying anything. You'll capture his attention and keep him focused.

Home project

Help your youngster turn playtime into project time. She'll practice planning and organization skills. For example, she could build a castle. Encourage her to draw a picture first and then list the materials she needs. She might use a cardboard box, foil for the towers, and craft sticks for a drawbridge.

Buddy up

Does your child receive special education services at school? Extend his learning at home by asking an older student to mentor him. If he has speech therapy, they might take turns reading lines from stories to improve pronunciation. A youngster in occupational therapy could strengthen hand muscles by working jigsaw puzzles or stacking blocks.

Worth quoting

"Success doesn't come to you ... you go to it." *Marva Collins*

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Why does the Statue of Liberty stand in New York Harbor?

Student: Because it can't sit down.



Falling for reading

Cozy fall evenings are perfect for curling up with a book. As the cooler weather and shorter days bring your child inside earlier, take advantage of the time to get him hooked on reading.



Story hour

Read aloud to your youngster. Try choosing a book that's slightly harder than one he can read on his own. The more complex plots and bigger words will stretch his comprehension skills and vocabulary. Plus, getting a sneak peek at what older kids are reading is a real motivator.

A family habit

Promote regular reading with a "What We're Reading" bulletin board. Provide sticky notes, and have each family member post a note to let everyone know what's on his nightstand. When others

are reading, your child will want to read also! *Tip:* Encourage visitors (grandparents, friends) to contribute to the board.

Pass the poetry

Sit in a circle and pass around a volume of poetry. Each person opens the book, reads aloud the first poem he sees, and passes it on. Suggest that your youngster copy and collect favorite poems in a binder to make his own poetry collection.

Note: Guarantee your child a steady supply of fresh reading material by taking him to the library often. ♥

Pal around

What creates bonds between friends? Sharing interests and helping each other! Try these ideas:

★ Help your youngster build on something she has in common with a classmate. If they both like cheerleading, your child might invite her to attend a local competition. Or if they enjoy scrapbooking, they could sign up for a community center class together.

★ Show your child how to give support when a friend needs her. Did her pal lose a pet? She could create a sympathy card on the computer. Is her friend upset about a low test grade? Suggest that your youngster offer to study with her for the next exam. ♥



Cybersafety 101



Q: We recently got an e-mail account for our daughter Maria. How can we protect her from inappropriate messages?

A: Take this opportunity to give your child a lesson in cybersafety. First, help her fill her address book with friends and relatives. Explain that she may open mail only from people on the list. You can set parental controls in the e-mail account that specify who your youngster can e-mail and which Web sites she can access.

Also, teach Maria not to share her e-mail address with anyone she doesn't know. Let her know that her address shouldn't



contain personal information, such as her name or even her hobbies, that could identify her. If registration is required to use a Web site, have your child enter your name and e-mail address instead of her own.

Help your youngster "unsubscribe" from any unwanted e-mail lists she ends up on. For example, companies can find her address if

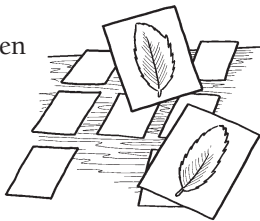
she gets a virtual greeting card, a request to view photos, or an electronic party invitation.

Finally, keep your computer in a visible spot—in the living room or kitchen—so you can monitor Maria's online activities.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Learn about leaves

The ground is covered with red, yellow, and orange leaves—try gathering them up and using them for learning. This matching game will sharpen your child's memory and help him learn to identify leaves.



Together, collect 10 pairs of matching leaves. Cut out 20 rectangles from construction paper, and glue a leaf to each one. Then, lay them, leaf side down, on the table.

Players take turns flipping over two squares. If the leaves match, the person keeps the pair. If not, the next player tries to find a pair. Take turns until all the leaves have been claimed. The winner is the player with the most pairs.

When the game ends, visit www.arbor-day.org/trees/treeID.cfm. Help your child answer questions about his leaves to learn which trees they came from.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Creative studying

Study time in our house doesn't always mean sitting at the table and working silently. After some struggles last year, we came up with several creative ways to get our son to study.

We started by finding places to display whatever Evan is studying. For example, he made a math placemat by writing his multiplication facts around the edges of a rectangle cut from poster board. We covered it with clear laminate, and now he reads the facts while he eats.

When it's Evan's turn in Trivial Pursuit, we ask him a question from his science chapter. Or when we play Balderdash or Scattegories, we use facts from his social studies notes. He works hard to learn the material so he can win the game!

So far this year, Evan has done well on quizzes and tests. I think our new ideas are paying off.♥



Families that play together...

How can your busy family find ways to spend time together? Here are a few suggestions.

● **Celebrate each new season.** You might toast pumpkin seeds and sip warm apple cider when autumn begins. Hide acorns and walnuts around your living room, and have your children pretend to be squirrels and search for them.



● **Get fit together.** Walk or bike with your youngsters to school. Find an indoor pool and enjoy a Saturday morning swim. Rent a video to learn hip-hop or swing dancing.

● **Set up a family carnival.** At one "booth," players can use kitchen tongs to fish for ice cubes in bowls of water. At another, toss rubber balls into plastic cups. *Idea:* The last stand can be a refreshment booth.♥

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