

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

September 2019



SHORT NOTES

Be considerate

Family meals offer plenty of chances for your youngster to practice being considerate. As you serve yourselves food, you might say, "Make sure to leave enough so everyone gets some." Or if there's one piece of chicken left, encourage your child to ask if anyone wants to split it instead of taking the whole thing for himself.

Tired after school!

As your youngster gets used to the routine of a new school year, she may be more tired than usual. Be sure she's getting 9–11 hours of sleep each night. Also, try to keep evenings low-key by not planning too many activities.

Cardboard box "origami"

Before tossing boxes in the recycling bin, use them to build your child's spatial sense and math skills. Have him pull each box apart at the seams and lay it flat. Can he tape it back together? *Idea:* Challenge him to make a mini pizza or cereal box using construction paper and tape.

Worth quoting

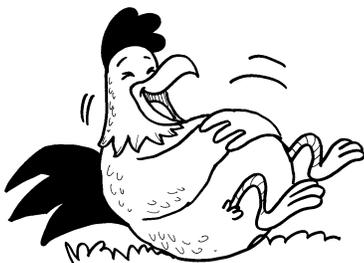
"Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."

Fred Rogers

JUST FOR FUN

Q: How many eggs did the farmer collect from his biggest rooster?

A: Zero. Roosters don't lay eggs!



The ABCs of school success

School success begins at home! While your child is learning her ABCs, 123s, and much more, she can get the year off to a great start with these *other* ABCs.

Attend every day

More time in class = more learning. Help your youngster attend school regularly by scheduling doctor appointments and family vacations outside of school hours. Also, she can cut down on sick days by eating her fruits and vegetables, washing her hands often, and getting plenty of physical activity.

Be organized

Forgotten homework? A backpack that doubles as a black hole? Good organizational skills prevent those problems. Together, brainstorm ways for your child to get—and stay—organized. For instance, she could choose a special folder for bringing home and returning homework and use a zipper bag to store pencils and other supplies.



Check in daily

Designate a time each day to sit down with your youngster, talk about what she did in school, and review papers she brought home. You might read a story she wrote or look over her math test, for example. This simple routine shows her that you care about what she's learning. Plus, you'll notice where she's doing well or if she's struggling with anything so you can follow up with her teacher.♥

Back to school...for parents

School rules keep students safe and let teachers do their job. Show your youngster that parents can help by following rules—just like he does. Here are a few examples:

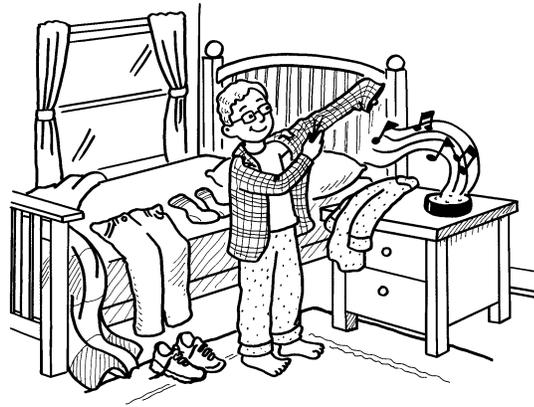
- Check in at the office as soon as you enter the school building, and be prepared to show identification.
- If you drive your child to school, be familiar with drop-off and pickup procedures. For instance, stay in your car, obey staff and patrol officers, and help your youngster exit the car quickly and safely.
- Follow rules for sending food to school. Is there a no-peanut policy? Are birthday treats allowed?
- Contact the teacher to arrange visits ahead of time rather than dropping in.♥



Getting out the door

Mornings help to set the tone for your child's school day. Consider these ideas for a routine that will send him off to school relaxed and ready to learn.

Add a "cushion." Does your youngster need to walk out the door at 8 a.m.? Have him pretend he has to leave by 7:45 a.m. and adjust his routine accordingly. If he's ready early, great! The cushion of extra time will make the morning feel more relaxed—and maybe even give him time to read for pleasure or review spelling words.



Simplify breakfast. Make healthy, ready-to-eat breakfast items ahead of time with your child. Overnight oatmeal, hard-boiled eggs, cheese cubes with fruit, and favorite sandwiches are all good bets. *Idea:* Let your youngster eat breakfast at school. Enjoying a hot, healthy meal with friends is a nice way to start the day.

Use a musical countdown.

Suggest that your child create a song playlist that fits the amount of time he has to get ready for school. Then, turn on the music when he wakes up. Once he's familiar with the order of the songs, he'll know how much time he has left just from listening to the music.♥

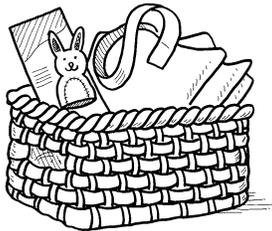


PARENT TO PARENT

Basket of clues

My daughter Aisha loves that her teacher begins each morning by giving the children clues about what they'll learn that day. At back-to-school night, the teacher mentioned that this lets them practice reading and thinking logically, so I decided to try it at home.

The next Saturday morning, I left a basket of clues on the coffee table about what our family would do in the afternoon. It included a finger puppet, a tote bag, and a bookmark. I added a message: "We will have fun at this place *and* bring some of the fun home in the bag." Aisha figured out that we were going to the library to watch a puppet show and check out books.



Now on Friday nights, Aisha asks me to make a clue basket. Sometimes, she even thinks of an activity she'd like to do and writes clues for me.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Time out for nature

Time spent enjoying nature has been shown to reduce

stress and improve children's—and adults'—mental health. The outdoors is a great place to learn, too. Enjoy these five activities with your youngster.

1. Search for spiderwebs, and let her "collect" them by taking photos with your phone.
2. Find a place to sit quietly and listen to the birds. Can your child spot the birds that make each sound you hear?
3. Take a few deep breaths, and tell each other what outdoor scents you smell (pine trees, flowers).
4. Look for different types of rocks. She can sort them according to size, shape, or color.
5. Explore favorite outdoor places in all kinds of weather. Splash in puddles on a rainy morning. On a sunny afternoon, observe the shadows that leaves make on the ground as the breeze blows them around.♥



Q & A

Persistence pays off

Q: My son is always eager to try activities, such as karate or student council. But then he'll ask to drop out because they're "too hard" or "too much work." How should I handle this?

A: Many youngsters are surprised when something that looks easy turns out to take hard work. Learning to find ways to overcome challenges will help your son stick with activities—and develop persistence.

When he mentions that a karate move or a student council job is taking too much effort, ask him what, specifically, is challenging. Then together, think of solutions. For example, if he's struggling with karate moves that involve balancing on one foot, brainstorm fun ways to improve his balance.

Over time, your child will get in the habit of looking for solutions instead of giving up.♥



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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5621

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October 2019

SHORT NOTES

Estimate everything!

Weave estimation into daily life to build your youngster's math skills. While cooking, you might ask, "How many cherry tomatoes do you think are in that container?" Or in a waiting room, challenge her to estimate the number of ceiling tiles. Have her count to check. The more she practices, the better she'll get at estimating.

Take initiative

Part of developing initiative is learning to recognize what needs to be done. Instead of guiding your child through each step in a task, get him in the routine of figuring out what to do next. If he's clearing the table and forgets to wipe it off, say, "Take a look at the table—what's the last step?"

Family fire drills

Use National Fire Prevention Week (October 6–12) to create a fire escape plan with your youngster. Encourage her to draw a map of your home with two exits per room and a meeting place outside. Then, hold a fire drill. *Note:* Studies show that many kids sleep through smoke alarms, so be sure your plan includes waking everyone up.

Worth quoting

"Learning is a treasure that will follow its owner everywhere."

Chinese proverb

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do you get when you cross a stream and a brook?

A: Wet feet.



Secrets of better behavior

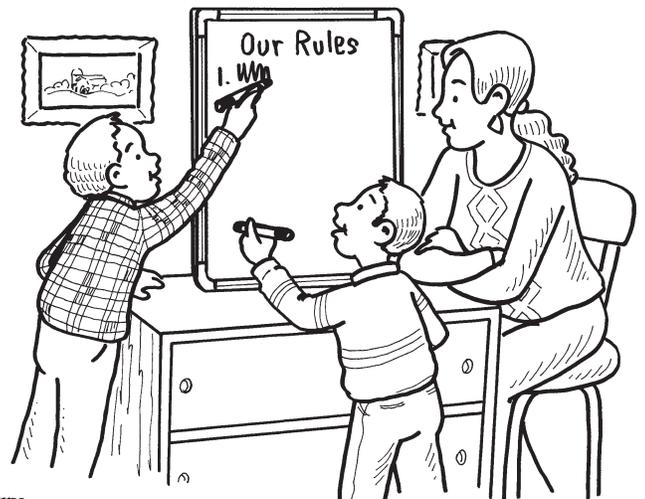
It's no secret that parents want their children to behave appropriately. But what really works? Try focusing on teaching your child to behave rather than punishing him for misbehavior, and you're likely to see better results. Consider these tips.

Be a mirror

Your youngster looks to you for guidance, so model the behavior you expect. For example, if he sees you staying calm when you're angry, he'll be less likely to throw fits when he's upset. Talk through your actions, too. You might say, "I had a stressful day at work. I'm going to relax with my book for a little while so I'm not cranky."

Make rules together

Children find it easier to remember and follow rules that they have a role in creating. Sit down together, and write a list. Be sure your youngster understands the reason behind each rule. For instance, ask, "Why shouldn't we leave things on the stairs?" (Because someone could trip



and fall.) *Tip:* If you need to add or change a rule, include him in that discussion, too.

Highlight success

When you praise your child, emphasize the good feelings he gets from behaving well. Saying "You must be proud of yourself for waiting so patiently" gives him a sense of accomplishment. That feeling of pride will motivate him to repeat the behavior in the future.♥

Mistakes make your brain grow

Did you know that mistakes actually help kids learn more? Use these ideas to encourage your youngster to make the most of her mistakes:

- Give your child room to "mess up." You might suspect that masking tape isn't strong enough to hold her project together. But she'll gain more from the experience if she tries, fails, and comes up with a new solution all by herself.

- Help your youngster put mistakes in perspective. Perhaps she forgot to include an important point during her class presentation. Ask her what part went well—maybe her graphics were cool and her classmates seemed interested in her topic.♥

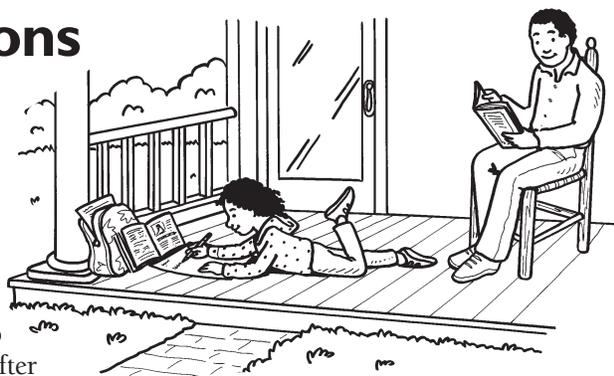


Homework solutions

Whether your child is new to homework or has been doing it for years, your support can help her do her best. That's important, because homework reinforces what she's learning in school. Here's how to set her up for success.

Find a good schedule

Set aside a specific time for homework so it becomes a habit, perhaps right before or after dinner. Also, suggest that she figure out a plan that works best for her. She could start with the easiest assignment to gain momentum or get the hardest one out of the way first.



Eliminate distractions

Make sure your child turns off electronics before she starts homework. Also, you might encourage everyone in the house to have "quiet time" while she does her assignments. Maybe you'll read or pay bills while younger siblings color, for instance.

Troubleshoot problems

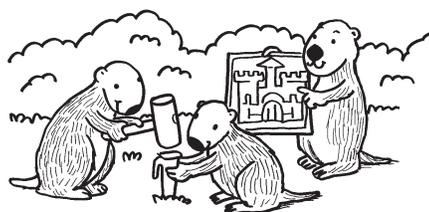
When your youngster gets stuck, offer to help—but avoid telling her the answers. If she's confused by the directions, try reading them together. Or if she's struggling with an addition problem, offer to walk her through a few sample problems in the back of her math book.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Engineer a maze

Ever get lost in a corn maze? That's what happened to our family last week at a fall festival. When we made our way out, the farmer explained that engineering and technology were used to create the maze.



My son Mason was fascinated. We learned that a designer drew the maze on a computer. Then, an engineer generated GPS coordinates, which guided the farmer as he mowed the corn into the maze.

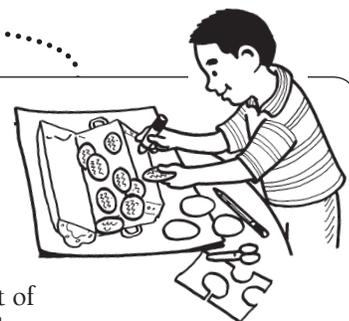
At home, Mason decided to create his own maze. He drew a castle-shaped design and plotted it out in the yard with tent stakes. Next, he arranged pool noodles, lawn chairs, and other outdoor items between the stakes. When it was ready, he invited friends over to go through his maze.

Now Mason is busy planning his next maze. I can't wait to see what it is!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Be a true friend

Children who form friendships with classmates tend to do better in school. Inspire your youngster to "treasure" his friends with this writing activity.



- 1. Draw:** Have him draw a treasure chest on a sheet of paper and make "coins" by cutting circles out of yellow paper.
- 2. Identify:** Take turns naming things you each value in a friendship. *Examples:* Being loyal, enjoying the same things, helping each other. Your child can write each idea on a separate coin.
- 3. Discuss:** Let him glue the coins onto his treasure chest. As he adds each one, you can both share real-life examples from your own friendships. Your youngster might say, "Raul and I like to read together at language arts time," and you could say, "My friend Jess helped us by bringing meals over after your sister was born."

Hang up his treasure chest as a reminder of qualities he'll look for in his classmates—and will remember to show in himself.♥

Q & A

The parent-teacher team

Q: I want to be more involved in my daughter's education. Where should I start?

A: Teaming up with your child's teacher is a great way to get started. Send the teacher a nice email, perhaps about a classroom activity your daughter enjoyed, and let him know you'd like to stay in touch throughout

the year. You might ask if you can volunteer in the classroom or from home.

Also, look over papers the teacher sends home. You'll see how your child is doing in various subjects. Then, if she's struggling with anything, you can reach out to the teacher for advice.

Finally, tell your daughter that you and her teacher are a team, with the same goal—helping her succeed in school.♥



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