

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

September 2006

MSAD #70 Elementary Program
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SHORT NOTES



In the bag

Does your child have trouble keeping track of her library books? Try using a library bag. Have her decorate a sturdy cloth bag or old backpack with brightly colored or metallic markers. Then, encourage her to keep all her library books in the bag—except the one she's reading!

Musical chores

To motivate children at chore time, put on some music while you work. Let kids take turns picking their favorite songs, and sing and dance while you water plants or put away dishes. You'll boost everyone's energy and turn chore time into fun time.

Still sunny

It's tempting to put sunscreen away when school starts, but kids can still get sunburned on a fall day. No matter what the temperature is, keep sunscreen on your youngsters throughout the year. *Note:* The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends using a sunscreen with an SPF of at least 15.

Worth quoting

"If you can dream it, you can do it."
Walt Disney

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What did the shaggy dog get when he multiplied 2,658 by 1,390?

A: The wrong answer!



Keep your eye on the goal

Jamie wants to do better in math this year. William hopes to stay more organized.

What does *your* child want to change this school year? Help him succeed by setting his own goals for success. To get started, try these steps.

Talk it over

Ask your child what he wants to improve, and offer your own ideas. Together, write down a few goals. *Examples:* "Read more books; finish homework earlier so I have more free time before bed." Remind your child that two or three goals are easier to focus on than a dozen.

Plan it out

Help your youngster think of ways to achieve his goals. To read more, he might schedule a daily half hour of reading time. To get homework done earlier, he could start right after school and work for an hour.

Watch for progress

Post a goal chart on the refrigerator. With each day of success (a book read, homework done before dinner), reward your child with a hug or high five. Consider a prize after longer periods. Reading a certain number of books or getting homework done early for two weeks, for example, could earn a sleepover or a trip to the bowling alley.

Idea: Post your own goals next to your child's goals ("prepare and freeze one extra meal a week"; "write thank-you notes for birthday gifts"). Then, you can work toward success together! ♥



Excellent extras

After-school activities are a great way for children to explore new interests. But how do you choose from all the options available today?

🎯 Ask your child's teacher for ideas. Check with other parents to see what their youngsters are doing. Give your child a few choices, and let her pick.

🎯 Visit the Web sites or get catalogs of the county parks and recreation department, your local 4-H, the YMCA, or a nearby community college.

🎯 Kids need to exercise both mind and body. Look for physical activities (soccer, tennis, dance) and creative outlets (art, music, chess).

Note: Don't overload your child. Keep several days a week free for playing with friends and quiet time alone. ♥



Finding time to volunteer

“Mom, my teacher needs parents to volunteer in my class next week. Can you come? Please?”

You’d love to volunteer, but you work, or you have younger kids—or both. How can you help? By doing little things when you can and where you can.

● **Clean up.** If you pick up your youngster after school, ask if you can drop in 10–15 minutes early and help the teacher tidy the classroom. She might like help dusting computer monitors, putting away supplies, or wiping down tables.



● **Go shopping.** Offer to shop for items your child’s teacher needs for the class. You can get them the next time you go to the office supply or grocery store. *Examples:* craft supplies or snacks for classroom parties.

● **Log on.** Do you have a computer? Find out if you can do online tasks from home. Maybe the teacher needs someone to update the class Web site or type letters to go home to parents.

Remember: A little bit goes a long way toward helping out a teacher—and letting your child know you care about her education. ♥



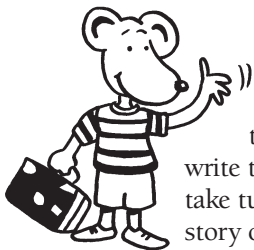
ACTIVITY CORNER Story makeover

Suppose Stuart Little showed up at your house today?

That’s one question your kids could think about with this fun family activity that will stretch their reading, listening, and imagination skills.

Have your children choose a favorite book, and read it together. Then, ask them to retell the story as if it were happening to *your* family.

Take Stuart Little, for example. How would you care for a baby mouse who acted like a real baby? Where would you find clothes for him? What would he eat? Where would he sleep? What would happen when he started going to your children’s school? Would he be able to



join the kickball team at recess? Invite your youngsters to share their ideas while you write them down. Then, take turns reading your new story out loud. ♥

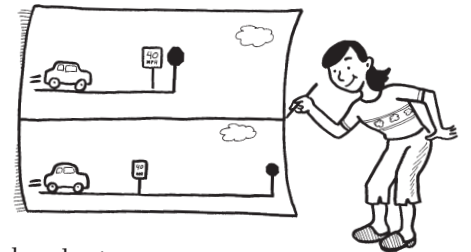
Q & A Sketch it out

Q: My child likes math, but she struggles with word problems. How can I help?

A: Many kids find word problems difficult. Try having your youngster draw what’s happening in the question and label each picture.

Example: “A car is traveling at 40 miles per hour. How far does it travel in 1½ hours?” Your child might draw a car on a road and label it “40 miles in 1 hour.” Then, she could draw a longer road underneath and label it “? miles in 1½ hours.”

Mapping out the question will help your child divide even long word problems into simple pieces. Once she understands the question, she will be able to use her math skills to write the equation and find the answer (40 miles x 1½ hours = 60 miles). ♥



PARENT TO PARENT That’s better!

My two boys are high-energy, active kids. When they’re excited about something, they can get a little too loud!

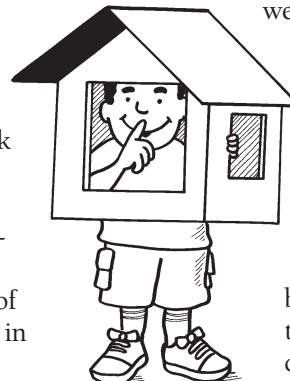
So when my children started school, we had to work hard to help them calm down and speak quietly around other kids.

We started by asking our pediatrician for suggestions. She encouraged us to tell our kids what kind of behavior we wanted to see in

the house—and at school. For example, we said, “Keep your voices down to indoor levels.” If they got too loud, we reminded them to use their

indoor voices. The doctor also told us to give the boys positive feedback: “You remembered to use your indoor voice. Good job!”

It took a few weeks of being consistent with our reminders and feedback, but the boys’ teachers tell me they’re being quiet and calm in class this year. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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