

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2006

MSAD #70 Elementary Program
Rhonda Foster, Home-School Coordinator

SHORT NOTES



Family volunteers

You've heard of parent involvement. How about *family* involvement? Ask your youngster's school about ways your whole family can help out. Perhaps you could all pitch in to rake leaves or pick up litter on the playground over the weekend. You'll have fun together—and the school will appreciate the extra hands!

Line them up

Sometimes kids get math problems wrong simply because they haven't lined up the numbers correctly. Try this. Have your child work problems on graph paper, using one box per number. Once he gets used to this system, he'll be able to transfer his lining-up skills to regular paper.

Avoid bad language

How can you keep your child from using bad language? Stay calm, and make a quiet suggestion. Say, "We don't use that word. Can you think of a better one?" Getting angry often just lends power to the bad words and makes them seem more interesting to kids.

Worth quoting

"We worry about what a child will become tomorrow, yet we forget that he is someone today." *Stacia Tauscher*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: Why did the little girl jump up and down after taking her medicine?

A: She forgot to shake the bottle first!

Studying—the buddy way

Picture your child and a friend sitting at the kitchen table, school books open, working hard.

That picture can come true with one simple ingredient—a study buddy. Encourage your youngster to pair up with a friend, and you'll find her looking forward to homework time! Here are some ideas for getting started.



● **Choose carefully.** Suggest that your child look for someone in her class so they'll have the same work to do. She'll want someone she likes, but it doesn't have to be her best friend. Encourage her to find a study buddy who is a hard worker and can concentrate quietly.

● **Pick a meeting place.** If your youngster lives close to her study buddy, they can take turns going to each other's houses. Or they could meet at the library, if you or the other parent can drive and chaperone.

● **Create a routine.** Encourage kids to set up a routine to follow during study sessions. *Example:* "Math assignments, then silent reading, then test review." Having a plan will help them focus and work more effectively.

● **Leave room for fun.** Offer study buddies a healthy snack before they start. Suggest a physical

activity break—halfway through their study time they could stop to do 10 jumping jacks. And make sure they have time left to play when they've finished their work. ♥

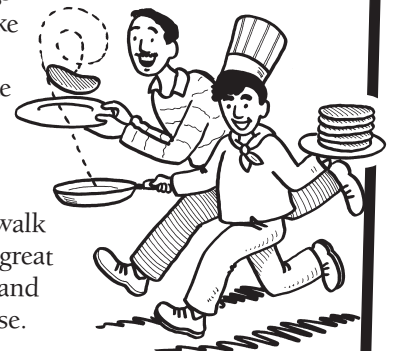
Fit in family time

Families are busier than ever these days, making time together all the more precious. Try these fast and fun ways to unwind and connect with each other.

Start a weekend ritual. Stay in your pajamas on weekend mornings to read stories or make a pancake breakfast. Small, cozy rituals like these can create lasting family memories.

Go around the block. Take a short walk after dinner. This is a great way to be together—and sneak in a little exercise.

Share a hobby. Do you like to sketch? Invite your kids to draw alongside you. Do your children enjoy jigsaw puzzles? Try working on one together. Sharing your interests will bring you closer. ♥



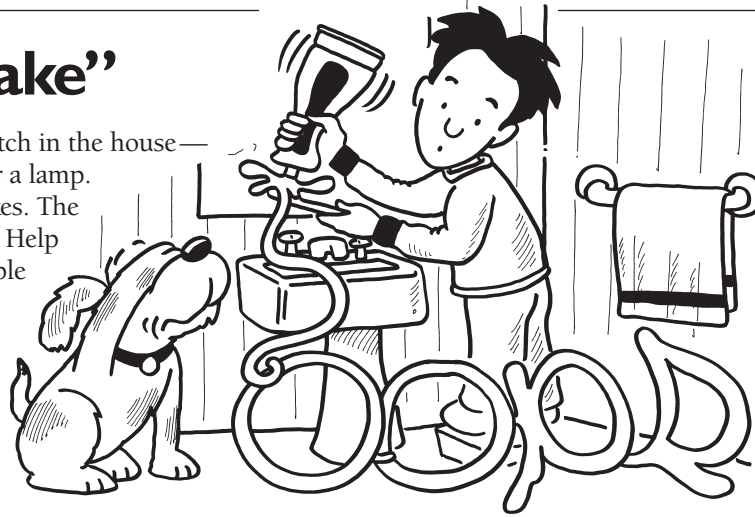
“I made a mistake”

Daniel and a friend were playing catch in the house—against your rules—and knocked over a lamp.

What now? Everyone makes mistakes. The important thing is to learn from them. Help turn your child’s mistakes into teachable moments with these strategies.

Admit it

Children sometimes are afraid to ‘fess up. They’re scared they will be scolded or punished, or that they won’t seem perfect in their parents’ eyes. To encourage your youngster to come forward, give him a chance to explain. (“Daniel, do you know what happened to the lamp?”)



Review it

When your child makes a mistake, talk about what went wrong and what he could have done differently. Ask him how he can turn the mistake around. (“I will save money from my allowance to help pay for repairing the lamp.”)

Prevent it

Finally, encourage your youngster to figure out how to keep this mistake from happening again. Have him come up with a specific solution for the future. (“I’ll remember our rules and won’t play ball in the house.”)♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Home-grown crystals

Your youngster’s face will sparkle when she sees water turn into crystals before her very eyes. Show her how with this easy science experiment.

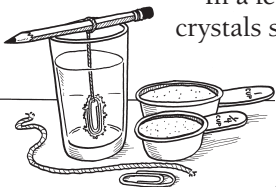
Materials: 1/4 cups of sugar, a glass of warm water, a few inches of string, a pencil, a paper clip

Stir the sugar into the water until it dissolves. Next, tie the paper clip to one end of the string and the middle of the pencil to the other. Then, lay the pencil across the top of the glass so the paper clip hangs in the water.

In a few days, sugar crystals should form on the paper clip.

Explain to your child that as the water evaporates, the

sugar that had been dissolved in the water becomes solid again, forming crystals. Save the crystals by removing them from the water to dry. For colored crystals, stir in a few drops of food coloring when you mix the solution.♥



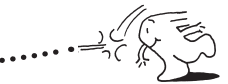
Q & A A+ book reports

Q: My son just found out he has to write his first book report. How can I help him?

A: The first thing he needs to do is get organized. Start by looking at the assignment together. Then, write the due date on a calendar, and talk about how long he will need for each step.

If the assignment allows your youngster to choose a book, encourage him to find one he thinks he will like. Together, figure out how many pages he should read each day to finish on time.

Before your child begins reading, suggest that he write these headings on a piece of paper: “Title,” “Author,” “Setting,” “Main characters,” “What I like about the book,” and “What I don’t like about the book.” Have him fill in the categories as he goes. That way, he’ll have all the information he needs to make writing the report a snap!♥



PARENT TO PARENT Name no names

When we got Internet access at our house last year, friends told me to teach my children not to give out personal information online. But I wasn’t sure what counted as “personal information.” I asked my son’s teacher, and he spelled it out for me.

Mr. Collins said a good rule of thumb is to teach kids not to give out specific person or place names. This includes the names of friends, relatives, their school, and even the name of our town. If they mention family and friends online, he suggested they use code names. Mr. Collins also told me to make sure my children make up screen names that don’t identify them by name or gender.

Now that my kids are following the “no-names” rule, I feel much safer when they are online.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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