

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

September 2008

MSAD #70 Mill Pond School

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## SHORT NOTES



### Dressed to learn

When choosing school clothes, safety and comfort count. Clogs, short skirts, and baggy pants can distract your child in class and make PE and recess challenging. Instead, help her pick clothes that fit well and can get dirty. Elastic-waist pants instead of belts, or leggings rather than tights, will make bathroom breaks easier for younger students.

### Good sport

Next time you play a game with your children, encourage good sportsmanship. Talk about the fun you had rather than who won: "Good game! I love Chinese checkers." Play games of chance (Candyland, Crazy Eights) so your youngster can experience winning *and* losing.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Students who get enough sleep can concentrate better and learn more. For elementary school children, that means 10–11 hours a night. Make getting into bed on time fun by giving your youngster a special bedtime kit that includes a book, a flashlight, and a soothing CD.

### Worth quoting

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

*Chinese proverb*

## JUST FOR FUN



**Q:** Why did the girl bring a ladder to school?

**A:** So she could go to high school!

## Blast off for success

Like an astronaut preparing for a launch, a student gearing up for a new school year will be more successful if she's organized and sticks to a routine. Here's a countdown your family can try.

### 3...

Organize mission control. Stock homework supplies (pencils, sharpener, paper, dictionary) in a convenient spot like a kitchen shelf or your child's desk. Set aside a box for storing graded work. Post school information, such as the calendar and cafeteria menu, on the refrigerator. Your youngster can highlight important events (test day, book fair) and lunches she plans to buy.

### 2...

Plan a soft landing with a regular after-school routine. *Example:* Empty backpack, eat a nutritious snack, exercise (walk around the block, ride bike), do homework. If your child doesn't have homework, she can read for 20 minutes, write in a journal, or play math games.

### 1...

Give your youngster a "breakfast briefing" each morning to help her get ready for the day. Wish her good luck on a quiz, remind her of a special activity such as an assembly, or ask what she wants to do in computer lab.

### Lift-off!

Prepare a "launch pad." Place a sturdy shopping bag in a hall closet or near the front door. Load it with extra socks, ponytail



holders, sunscreen, snack bars, and water. Your child can grab what she needs on her way out. Have her keep her backpack next to the bag for a smooth takeoff. ♥

## Ways to praise

Complimenting your child is a great way to boost his confidence. Choosing the right words can motivate him to try new things and work hard, too. Here are a few suggestions:

★ Focus on your youngster's feelings. Try, "You must be proud of yourself," in addition to, "I'm so proud of you."

★ Praise his achievements. You might say, "You've got subtraction down pat!" instead of, "You're so smart."

★ Place an encouraging note on your child's bedroom door. *Example:* "This room is sparkling. Your hard work shows!"

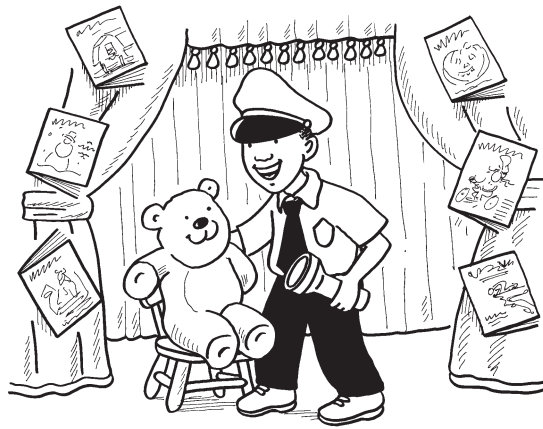
★ Praise him to others when he's within earshot: "Chris was so nice to his sister when she scraped her knee." ♥



# Artful learning

All the world's a stage...especially when your youngster sings, acts, and dances his way to better learning. Help him improve his memory, comprehension, and creativity—and make school subjects more fun—with these ideas.

**Music.** To recall facts easily, your child can invent new lyrics for familiar songs. For example, he can sing vowels to the tune of "B-I-N-G-O": "A-E-I-O-U, A-E-I-O-U, A-E-I-O-U, and sometimes Y is too!" Or he might rap about multiplication: "I have 6 friends. They each have 8 bucks. That's 48 dollars, so they're all in luck."



**Drama.** Staging a mini-play will help your youngster understand what he reads. Have him read a book, choose a character, and gather some props. Then, he can retell the story from his character's point of view. *Example:* Your youngster can use a stuffed bear and a flashlight to narrate *Corduroy* (by Don Freeman) through the night watchman's eyes.

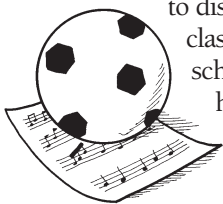
**Dance.** Help your child create a dance to visualize a science topic like the Earth's rotation and revolution. He might spin like the Earth (rotate) and circle around you (revolve) as you pretend to be the sun. Recreating the movements will help him understand abstract ideas.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### School scavenger hunt

Send your child on a scavenger hunt that will help him get comfortable in his new classroom.

Together, write down five things for him to discover about his room, classmates, teacher, and school. *Examples:* a song his teacher sang, the name of someone who likes the same sport he does, the room number of his art class, an after-school activity he'd like to try.



Read over the list each morning the first week of school. Suggest that your youngster look around and talk to others at recess or lunch to find the answers. After school, he can fill in the blanks. Read the answers at the end of the week—he'll be surprised by how much he knows about his school.

*Tip:* Encourage him to follow up by joining an extracurricular activity or inviting a new friend home.♥

## Q & A

### Stocking the classroom

**Q:** I work full time and can't visit my child's school during the day. How can I contribute to his class?

**A:** Your youngster's teacher would probably welcome new materials for the classroom. Send a note or an e-mail asking what she needs. Let her know whether you're willing to buy items, provide recycled ones, or both.

She may ask you to send supplies to add to learning centers—rice for the rice table, buttons or beads for the math area, or magnets and magnifying glasses for the science center.

Or the teacher might have you collect recyclables to send in with your child from time to time. For example, she may need empty milk cartons or cereal boxes, paper towel tubes, or old magazines. *Note:* Consider asking your youngster's music, art, and PE teachers what supplies they need, too.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### What's on the agenda?

One day, our daughters asked for a raise in their allowance. I told them we'd discuss it later, so Corinne posted a reminder on the refrigerator: "Allowance!" That gave me an idea. I added a sheet next to it titled "Family Meeting Agenda."

I told the girls that some families meet to plan activities, solve problems, and just enjoy each other's company. They liked the idea. So

we decided to gather on Sundays after dinner and to put anything we wanted to discuss on the agenda.

At our first meeting, we talked about allowances. I started by showing the girls our budget. Megan noticed we had only two car payments left, so we agreed on a raise in two months. I think taking part in a family decision made our children feel important and taught them about problem solving. We're all looking forward to our next meeting!♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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