

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

December 2016

Ithaca Elementary School



SHORT NOTES

Weather emergency kit

Let your youngster help you prepare for winter emergencies. Brainstorm what you might need if the power goes out or if you're stuck inside during a snowstorm. *Examples:* Flashlights, batteries, bottled water, canned goods, first aid kit. Together, put the items in a box and find a safe place to keep it.

Thinking games

Stretch your child's thinking skills by playing Fortunately, Unfortunately. One person states a good event ("Fortunately, all the stoplights have been green"). The next player says a silly, but related, "bad" event ("Unfortunately, the law changed, and green means Stop"). Continue until you get stuck—then start over.

Your child's digital footprint

It's tempting to post cute pictures of your youngster or tell funny parenting stories on social media—but first consider his feelings. And since his online trail will stick with him forever, think about how he'll feel when he's older. Get his permission before posting, or let him decide who will be able to see it (say, only relatives).

Worth quoting

"Wishing to be friends is quick work, but friendship is a slow-ripening fruit." *Aristotle*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did the girl wear one mitten and one boot?

A: Because she heard there was a 50 percent chance of snow.



Connect reading and writing

Reading will make your child a better writer—and vice versa. That's good news, because both will help her do well in every subject. Here are ways she can explore the link between reading and writing.

Try genres

Introduce your youngster to a wide variety of books, from fairy tales and science fiction to graphic novels and biographies. Reading different genres will give her more options to think about—suggest that she branch out and try writing in one of those new genres.

Collect "gems"

Have your child keep a notebook of her favorite parts of stories. She could choose interesting words or lines. She'll get in the habit of paying close attention



to the language that writers use, which will give her ideas for her own writing.

Review books

Your youngster could be a budding book critic and write reviews about what she reads. She'll practice opinion writing and deepen her reading comprehension as she summarizes the plot. Encourage her to include details and quotes from the book to back up her opinions. ("The main character showed empathy when he said, 'I know what it's like to be the new kid in school.'")♥

Volunteer success

Whether you're volunteering in your youngster's school or from home, consider these tips.

Contact the teacher. Let him know you'd like to help, tell him when you're available, and find out what he needs.

Follow the rules. Ask questions if you're not sure what's expected. For instance, are home-baked goods acceptable, or do treats have to be store-bought and sealed, with ingredients listed? Are younger siblings allowed to come along? What are the guidelines for keeping student information confidential?

Enjoy the experience! Volunteering is rewarding for parents, teachers, and students. Know that you're making a difference, and talk to your child about how you're helping out.♥



A dependable child

Kyle's parents count on him to walk his little sister home from school. And Jamal's parents know he'll remember to set the table without being asked. These parents are raising dependable youngsters—and you can, too, with these suggestions:

- Talk to your child about who depends on you. You could say, "My company relies on me to be on time, so I have to leave for work now." Your youngster will see that being dependable is a part of life.



- When you need your child to do something, let him know you're counting on him. He'll be likely to meet your expectations if you say something like "I know I can depend on you to feed the dog."

- Show your youngster how good it feels to follow through when someone is relying on him. You might have him sign up to

work with a student who is learning English or who needs extra help with math. Use encouraging comments such as, "I know Julian looks forward to seeing you every day," or "I bet David is learning a lot from you."♥

ACTIVITY CORNER



DIY wrapping paper

Let your child design homemade wrapping paper—and show thoughtfulness by personalizing each person's package. Try these ideas.

Sponge stamps. Help your youngster cut apart large brown paper bags. Then, she could cut sponges into stars, hearts, or other shapes, and dip them into paint. Suggest that she stamp them onto the paper in a pattern (heart, star, star, heart, star, star).



"Mapping" paper. Have an old atlas? Your child might cut out maps and tape them together to make sheets of wrapping paper. If she's sending a gift to a relative in another state or country, she could select a map of that place.

Artwork. Who wouldn't love to receive your youngster's original artwork? Ask her to wrap a few gifts in her own paintings or sketches.♥

Navigating group projects

Learning to work on assignments as a group is an important part of school. Share this advice for helping your youngster succeed with projects and presentations.

Get input

Everyone in the group should give input. Your child might get quieter members to express their opinions by asking, "Which format do you like for our presentation?"

List duties

At the first meeting, one person can write and distribute a list of responsibilities, including due dates for each task. That way, everyone will remember what they're supposed to do.

Update each other

During follow-up meetings, group members should give updates on their progress and brainstorm solutions to any problems. If anyone is falling behind, other members could offer support or ideas.♥



Q & A Be your own "CEO"

Q: I've been hearing a lot lately about executive function skills. What are they, and should I be helping my son work on them?

A: These skills let your child manage himself, like an executive overseeing the operations of a company or an air-traffic controller directing flights for landing. A student with good executive function skills is able to juggle tasks, plan

ahead, stay organized, and make decisions about his actions.

You could help your son sharpen these skills with strategy games. For example, chess is ideal because players must plan several moves in advance and consider multiple possibilities. Or try 20

Questions, since players have to keep in mind answers to all previous questions as they decide what to ask next.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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