

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

November 2016

Ithaca Elementary School

SHORT NOTES

Fall back

Does your youngster know why people in most states will turn their clocks back an hour on November 6? Help her read up on the history of Daylight Saving Time—she'll practice research skills for a real-life reason. Then, she could share what she discovers with your family and change your clocks.

Assistant chef

Let your child help you with Thanksgiving dinner and look for ways to make it more nutritious. For instance, use whole-wheat bread for stuffing or mash cauliflower instead of potatoes. Involve him in every step of the process, and he'll learn about planning healthy meals, shopping for ingredients, and cooking.

Put away cell phones

Whether or not your youngster uses a cell phone, she'll notice the phone habits of adults around her. Make a point of putting away your phone during meals and while talking or playing with her. Your example will show her that it's polite to give others your undivided attention—and more fun to talk to the person you're with.

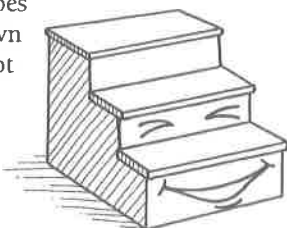
Worth quoting

"Yesterday is history. Tomorrow is a mystery. Today is a gift. That's why we call it the present." *Eleanor Roosevelt*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What goes up and down but does not move?

A: Stairs.



Secrets to better behavior

You know what they say: An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. That's true when it comes to effective discipline, too. Try these ideas for heading off problems, and then sit back and enjoy a more pleasant household.

Notice triggers

Being aware of what causes misbehavior goes a long way toward preventing it. Perhaps your youngster acts out when he's tired—make sure he's getting 9–11 hours of sleep. Or maybe he misbehaves when he's bored. Let him write a list of activities for when there's "nothing to do" (examples: play solitaire, finger paint, do crossword puzzles).

Offer choices

Give your child some control in situations where he struggles to behave. Does he typically grumble or whine while you're running errands? Consider letting him pick the order in which to do them. ("We need to go to the laundromat and the store. Which should we do first?") Is it hard to get him to dress



up for family events? He might like to choose the color of his shirt or pick out a pair of fun socks to wear.

Be a coach

Coaches demonstrate, encourage, and celebrate. Why not use this approach for behavior you want your youngster to change? If he should be putting dirty clothes in his hamper, for instance, "coach" him on tossing in his T-shirts. He'll see that it's more fun to "make a basket" than to drop clothes on the floor. When you find his floor free of dirty clothes the next time, give him a high five.♥

Questions for parent-teacher conferences

Parent-teacher conferences go by fast! Make the most of your time by writing a list of questions in advance. Consider these suggestions:

- "What are some of the most important things my child should learn this year?"
- "How does she get along with classmates when she works in a group?"
- "What subject do you think she enjoys the most?"
- "What are my youngster's strengths?"
- "What can we do at home to help her do her best in school?"♥



Household elections

An election lets a group of people make a decision, whether it involves citizens electing a mayor or children choosing student council officers. Show your youngster democracy in action by holding elections in your home.

1. Choose topic. Have your child pick an issue to vote on. It could be practical (“Should we paint the bathroom green or blue?”) or fun (“Should we get a fish or a hamster?”).

2. Campaign. Each person can campaign for her side, presenting reasons why others should



vote her way. You may decide to make posters or give speeches to persuade family members.

3. Create ballots. Let your youngster make a ballot for each family member and get an empty tissue box to put the ballots in.

4. Vote. Select an evening for your election. Cast your votes, and your child can tally them and announce a winner.

Tip: Use this activity as an opportunity to talk about the national elections this month. Take your youngster with you when you vote, explain the choices you make, and watch the results together on election night.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Create a chain reaction

Your youngster can watch a chain reaction before his very eyes—all he needs is a set of dominoes.

Have him stand the dominoes in a line, making sure the distance between each one is about



the same. What happens when he knocks down the first domino? (It will topple the whole line of dominoes in turn.) Suggest that he try putting them closer together or farther apart, or even arranging them in a circle, U-shape, figure 8, or spiral. He could use a timer to find out which spacing or arrangement makes the dominoes fall fastest.

As he experiments, he'll learn about chain reactions, where energy is transferred from one object to another.

Idea: Encourage your child to look for examples of real-life chain reactions, such as how the pins fall when he bowls.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

It pays to be kind

We recently stopped to pay a toll, only to be told that the driver ahead of us had paid our way. My son John said, “But he doesn't even *know* us!”

I explained that the driver had done a “random act of kindness”—something kind without being asked or expecting anything in return. Big or small, I told John, these good deeds make the world a better place. My son said he wanted to do a random act of kindness, too. So after raking the leaves in our yard, he secretly raked our next-door neighbor's. He felt so good seeing her smile when she got home that he started looking for a way to be kind to someone else.

Now random acts of kindness have become a regular thing in our household. And John has discovered that when he does something for someone else, *he* is the one who feels good.♥



Know your library

The local library is a great place for your child to discover books she will treasure, find information for school projects, or simply settle in and read. Help her establish a library habit with these ideas.

Get a card. Have your youngster sign up for her own library card. This will make her feel like she belongs at “her” library.

Become acquainted. Explore different sections of the library together. Encourage her to get to

know the librarians—they will recommend titles or help her locate resources.

Return books on time. Fines can add up and keep your family from checking out more books. Suggest that your child decorate a reusable bag to hold books and add a sticky note with the due date. Each time she checks out books, she could replace the note with a new one—and a new due date.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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