

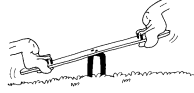
Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2013

Portage Area Elementary School
Title I Program

SHORT NOTES



School “tour”

Spark conversations about your child’s day by visiting the school website together. For example, she might see photos of a recent assembly and tell you what she learned from it. Or she could find links to educational websites she uses in class and explain how she solves math problems or plays word games.

Being neighborly

Demonstrate what it means to be a good neighbor. You might turn down your music so it doesn’t bother the people in the apartment below you or mention how you’re walking on the sidewalk instead of the neighbor’s lawn. *Idea:* Ask your youngster how he was neighborly at school (opened a classmate’s milk, loaned his neighbor a glue stick).

What’s the message?

Here’s an interesting way to encourage your child to think critically—and to show her how advertising influences people. Point out billboards and ask questions like, “What’s the purpose of that ad?” Then, let her use papers and crayons to design her own “billboard” promoting something she cares about, such as being kind to animals or doing gymnastics.

Worth quoting

“While we try to teach our children all about life, our children teach us what life is all about.” *Angela Schwindt*

JUST FOR FUN

Isabel: Did you hear the story about the skunk?

Teacher:
No. Tell me.

Isabel: Never mind. It stinks.



Organized for a new year

Getting—and staying—organized can help your child juggle demands and succeed in school. As 2013 gets under way, suggest that he try these ideas for a more organized year.

Declutter

Encourage your youngster to keep his backpack and desk organized. When he gets home each day, have him empty his backpack and put homework assignments and textbooks in one spot. Then, go over papers together, and sign any forms. He might store graded work in empty cereal boxes labeled by subject. At school, he could spend a minute a day cleaning out his desk as he’s packing up for dismissal.

Write it down

Using planners and calendars can help your child remember what he needs to do each day. If he has a planner, he should list all assignments and activities. (A small spiral notepad works if your school doesn’t give out planners.) Also, have him fill in his events (soccer practice, birthday



parties) on a family calendar. Try using a different color of ink for each person—family members can see their obligations at a glance.

Use time wisely

Remind your youngster that minutes add up. A simple thing like putting tomorrow’s snack in his backpack before bed can mean the difference between making the bus and missing it. *Tip:* Ask him how long he needs to get ready for school, and have him set a timer to check. Gradually his estimates will improve, and he’ll manage his time better. ♥

Sharing special moments

Help your youngster feel happy, secure, and loved with these tips.

Make good-byes pleasant. Even if your morning is hectic, let her leave on a positive note (“I’m looking forward to eating pizza with you tonight!”).

Leave notes. You might write, “Have a great day,” and tuck it in her lunch box, or “Good morning, sunshine,” and set it beside her breakfast plate.

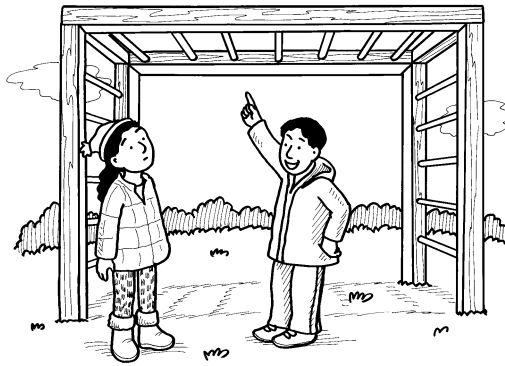
Tell stories. The night before a big test or tryouts for the school play, give your child something comforting to think about as she falls asleep. For example, tell her the story of when she was born or when you brought her home. ♥



Resisting peer pressure

“I dare you to climb on top of the monkey bars.” The first time your youngster faces peer pressure, it probably won’t be about drinking or smoking. But learning to handle situations at an early age can help her resist more serious pressure later on. Here’s how.

Think of responses. Talk about things kids say when they’re pressuring each other. *Examples:* “I won’t be your friend,” “You’re a baby,” “Your parents



have different financial situations and values, and make sure she understands yours.

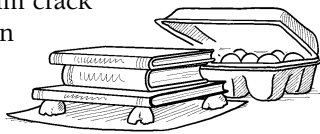
Build confidence. Healthy self-esteem can help your youngster brush off peer pressure. Have her participate in activities that let her use her talents, like sports, scouts, or the arts. She will develop skills and character traits to feel good about. And she may make friends who will provide *positive* peer pressure—encouraging her to help others or work hard, for example.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Arches and domes

The ancient Romans realized that building with arches and domes could make structures stronger. Let your youngster see how this principle works—and why arches and domes are still important in our world today.

1. Help him crack two eggs in half and empty the contents.



2. Have him place the shells, domes facing up, on four corners of a sheet of paper.

3. Next, he can stack hardback books, one at a time, on top of the shells. *Tip:* He should make sure the shells don’t move as he places the books.

Your child might be surprised by how many books he can pile on before the shells begin to crack. That’s because the shape of eggshells—like the shape of arches and domes—allows weight to be distributed evenly.

Idea: Suggest that your youngster look for arches under bridges and domes on buildings around town. How many can he find?♥



Good attendance

With cold and flu season upon us, help your child stay healthy and keep up her school attendance with these suggestions:

- Boost her immunity with a balanced diet that includes lots of fruits and vegetables.
- Make sure she gets enough sleep (9–11 hours a night).
- Try for 60 minutes of physical activity a day—regular exercise can also help ward off sickness.
- Avoid the spread of germs with frequent hand washing.
- Ask her doctor if she should get a flu shot.

While it’s important for her to be in school, it’s also important for her to stay home if she’s sick—both so she can recover and so she doesn’t make others sick. Check your school’s policy for symptoms requiring her to stay home (a rash, a fever within the last 24 hours). If you aren’t sure, call the school nurse or your doctor.♥



Siblings with special needs

Q: *Our daughter has cerebral palsy, and our son is jealous of the attention his little sister needs.*

What can I do?

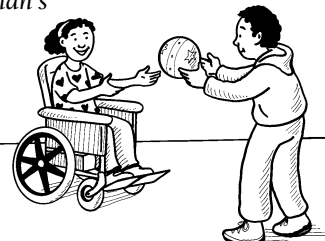
A: Helping your son understand his sister’s condition can reduce jealousy. You might start by reading a book to him about cerebral palsy, like *Nathan’s Wish* (Laurie Leary) or *Rolling Along* (Jamee Riggio Heelan).

Then, look for support groups—your local chapter of The Arc is a good place to start. They might offer activities for siblings to do

together and also introduce him to other children whose brothers or sisters have special needs.

Finally, try to give your son some one-on-one time when you can. If your daughter goes to physical therapy, play games with him in the waiting room. Or let him have a later bedtime, and read

to him after she has gone to bed. If he gets your undivided attention even for a few minutes a day, he will be less likely to resent the time you spend on her care.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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