

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

September 2011



South Mountain Elementary School
Mrs. Deb Heilman, Principal

SHORT NOTES

TV solutions

Encourage your youngster to watch less TV without saying a word! First, help him choose a limited number of shows. Then, record them as a “list of favorites.” He can watch the shows, one at a time, and fast-forward through the commercials. Also, be sure to turn the set off when no one’s watching.

Be a leader

After-school activities can build leadership skills. Check the school website or newsletter, and suggest activities that your child might enjoy. For instance, she could run for student council, serve as a peer counselor, or be a yearbook editor. She’ll gain practice being in charge, which can help her feel comfortable tackling bigger roles as she gets older.

One-on-one time

Spending time alone with each of your children on a regular basis can help you stay close. For instance, play cards or work on a scrapbook with your older child after the little one is in bed. Or bake cookies with your youngest when your older children are out playing with friends.

Worth quoting

“Education is learning what you didn’t even know you didn’t know.”

Daniel J. Boorstin

JUST FOR FUN

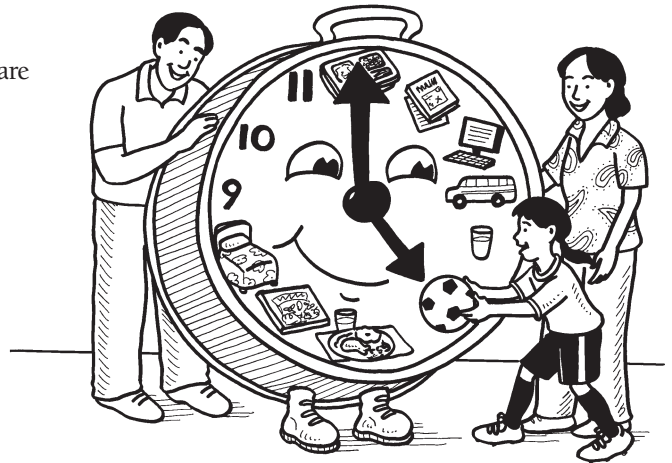
Q: Six children were walking under one umbrella. Why didn’t they get wet?

A: It wasn’t raining.



All set for learning

When you ask your child about her day at school or help her prepare for the next day, you teach her that learning is important. She’ll see that success in the classroom begins at home—with family conversations, regular routines, and healthy habits. Try these tips for a great year.



Talk about school.

Encourage your child to share her accomplishments with you by asking her specific questions. (“What did you make in art?” “Who did you read about in history?”) Or make it a game to discuss the day on your way home—take turns describing something you did, and see how much each person can share before you reach your house.

Follow a routine. Create a schedule for your youngster to stick to on school nights. Include time for homework, dinner, playing, reading for pleasure, and relaxing. *Tip:* Ask her teacher how much

homework your child can expect, and help her set aside enough time to finish it. Finally, figure out a bedtime that gives her 9–11 hours of sleep.

Make attendance a priority. Let your youngster know that it’s important to be in school every day. Talk about ways she can stay healthy and avoid sick days, like washing her hands regularly and eating a balanced diet that includes plenty of fruits and vegetables. Also, try to schedule doctor appointments and family trips when school isn’t in session. ♥

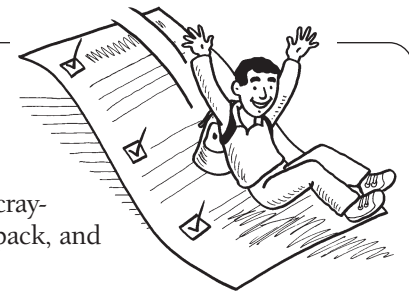
My checklist

Who is in charge of your youngster’s learning? He is! Share this checklist to help him do his best.

I arrive ready to learn. I have the supplies I need (sharpened pencils, eraser, paper, crayons). I have completed homework in my backpack, and I will remember to turn it in.

I’m a good listener. I look at my teacher, and I think about what she is saying. I keep my hands and feet to myself, and I am quiet so others can hear.

I participate in class. I raise my hand to answer the teacher’s questions. I share my ideas during discussions. ♥



Strategies for success

There's more to doing well on an assignment than knowing the material. Your child needs to understand the directions, avoid careless mistakes, and look over his work when he's finished. Suggest these ideas.

1. Read directions carefully. It might help your child to underline important information



("Use blue to circle the math problems that equal 7") or to say the instructions in his own words ("If the answer is 7, the circle should be blue"). He can also refer back to the directions to make sure he stays on track.

2. Learn from mistakes. Encourage your youngster to make a list of his most common errors. ("The first letter in a sentence is uppercase." "The less-than sign points to the smaller number.") He can tape his list in a folder, notebook, or binder so he can consult it as he works.

3. Double-check. When your child finishes an assignment, he should reread it to be sure he did his best. He can check subtraction problems ($15 - 9 = 6$) by adding ($9 + 6 = 15$) or use a dictionary to look up words.♥

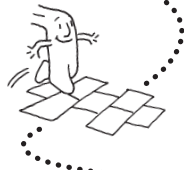
ACTIVITY CORNER

Starring... me!

On the first day of school, did your child write about her summer vacation? Now encourage her to write at home by creating more stories about her life:

- Have her summarize a special hobby or interest in exactly 10 words. This activity will teach your youngster to get her point across using only the most important words. She can start with as many words as she needs and then cut those that aren't essential. *Example:* "Soccer is fun. I love dribbling, passing, and making goals."

- She could write a story in the format of a graphic novel. These books have comic strip frames on each page. Suggest that your child divide a sheet of paper into four to eight squares. In each, have her draw a different scene from a family activity (camping, crafts). Let her write a sentence to go with each one ("Dad and I pitched a tent") and include dialogue in bubbles above characters' heads ("Listen to the crickets!").♥



PARENT TO PARENT

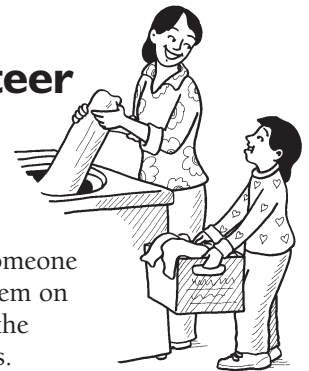
This year, I'll volunteer

I've always wanted to volunteer at my children's school, but I work during the day and couldn't seem to find time. This year, I emailed the girls' teachers to ask how I could help.

My younger daughter's kindergarten teacher needed someone to take the classroom dress-up clothes home and wash them on a regular basis. She also wanted help collecting items for the science table, so I've sent in pinecones, acorns, and leaves.

For my fifth-grade daughter's teacher, I have been calling parents to find volunteers who will read aloud to the class or help out in the computer lab.

I was surprised to discover how many volunteer opportunities there are for working parents. My girls are proud that I'm helping, and seeing how much the teachers appreciate my help makes me feel good, too.♥



Q & A Playground fun for everyone

Q: My son doesn't like recess. He says he isn't good at jumping rope or climbing on the jungle gym.

How can I help him feel more confident and enjoy recess more?

A: Recess is important because it provides exercise and gives your child a break from school-work. It's also a good opportunity to build social skills, like starting conversations with other children and working together to

make decisions about what and how to play.

Try visiting playgrounds together to build your son's confidence. Let him practice skills like climbing ladders, sliding down poles, crossing monkey bars, swinging, and kicking and catching a ball.

Also, suggest that he make recess plans ahead of time. In the morning, for example, he might ask a friend to play hopscotch with him on the playground.

Finally, be sure to ask how it's going, and if things don't improve, talk to his teacher.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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