

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

Working Together for School Success

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West Salem Elementary School

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## SHORT NOTES

### Attendance adds up

Students who attend school regularly tend to have better attitudes toward school—and they're more likely to read at grade level. Try to schedule your child's doctor and dentist appointments outside of school hours. Also, be sure to create a backup plan for getting her to school if she misses the bus or you can't drive her.

### The importance of integrity

What would your youngster say if a classmate asked him to cheat? Talk to him about how to respond if he's pressured to share answers or let others copy his work. For example, he could say, "Let's study together so we both do well," or "I don't want to risk getting a zero."

### DID YOU KNOW?

The average child with a parent in the military moves every two to three years. Encourage your youngster to introduce herself to all new students. If you're a military family, contact your school liaison officer and the school counselor about programs available to help your child adjust.

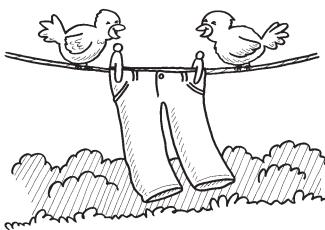
### Worth quoting

"All the world is a laboratory to the inquiring mind." *Martin H. Fischer*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What has two legs but doesn't walk?

**A:** A pair of pants!



## A great beginning

The story of your child's school year is about to unfold. A strong opening chapter will help to set the tone for a great year. Try these strategies.

### Introduce the characters

Your youngster's teacher will play an important role in his life this year. Write her a short note, and attach a picture of your family. You might mention your child's hobbies, favorite school subjects, and family members' names. Also, find out how the teacher prefers to be contacted. Getting to know each other now will help you work together in future "chapters."

### Get to know the setting

Invite your youngster to tell you about his classroom, the library, and other places at school. What decorations hang on the walls? What books or games are on the shelves? When possible, see for yourself by going to events like book fairs and



math nights. *Idea:* Encourage him to draw you a picture of his classroom to hang on the refrigerator.

### Enjoy the plot

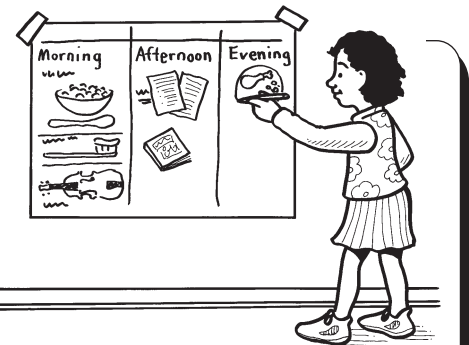
Attend back-to-school night to find out what your child will learn this year. Then, plan family outings or activities related to the topics. If he'll study your state's history, you could visit historic sites. Or if there's a plant unit, let him help you work in the garden or plant seeds in pots. ♥

## Routines that stick

Little habits make a big difference in the kind of day you and your youngster have. Here are things each of you could do to create routines for smooth days.

**Your child can:** Make a picture chart of what she needs to do every morning, afternoon, and evening. She might draw a backpack as a reminder to show you papers she brings home. A picture of a violin could prompt her to practice her instrument.

**You can:** Have her go to bed in time to get 9–11 hours of sleep and to eat a healthy breakfast in the morning. Set aside downtime after a busy day (perhaps 20 minutes when she gets home) so she'll be recharged for homework, chores, and family time. ♥



# Strengthen social skills

School is more pleasant for everyone when children share classroom materials and compromise to solve problems. Consider this advice for improving your youngster's social skills so she learns to get along with others now and later.

### Practice sharing

Do activities with your child that require sharing. For example, color together, and let her



practice asking for the purple or the green crayon nicely. She could say, "May I use that when you're done?" And you might reply, "Sure, I'll give it to you as soon as I finish coloring this dragon."

### Learn to compromise

Your youngster and her classmates may disagree on how to approach a group project or a science experiment. Help her prepare by looking for ways to find middle ground at

home. Say she and a sibling argue over what book they'd like you to read at bedtime. They could take turns choosing a story every other night or ask you to read one chapter from each book. If they can't compromise, offer a suggestion like reading a book you pick.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

# Outdoor magic

I used to play outside all the time when I was little, but my sons never seem interested in leaving the house. One day, while reminiscing with my sister about all the fun we had outdoors as kids, an idea struck me.

I labeled a bin "Outdoor fun" and put it near the front door. Then, I asked my boys



to fill it with things to play with outside. They found a yo-yo, balls, a Frisbee, a jump rope, and sidewalk chalk. I added a magnifying glass, a jar for collecting rocks and other treasures, and a bucket and shovel for digging in the dirt.

Having this bin in plain sight reminds my sons how much fun it is to play outside. I love seeing them using their imaginations outdoors and getting exercise. And surprisingly, they're not asking for screen time as often.♥



## Q & A

# Smart money management

**Q:** We've started giving our third-grade daughter a small allowance. How can we teach her to be responsible with her money?

**A:** Learning to manage money wisely will give your youngster financial skills to use throughout her life.

Encourage her to write a budget for herself. She could list inexpensive items she asks you to buy for her, such as hair accessories or slime-making supplies. She can also include something she wants to save up for and gifts she'd like to buy others for birthdays and holidays.

Help your daughter look up prices of the items. Then, she should decide how much money to save each week. Consider letting her open a savings account, too. You can show her how to check the balance—she'll feel pride as she watches her savings grow.♥

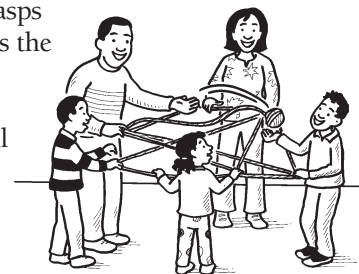


## ACTIVITY CORNER

# Attention stretchers

Boost your child's attention span with these hands-on ideas that use everyday materials:

- Create a "spiderweb." Have everyone stand in a circle with one person holding a ball of yarn. That person grasps one end of the yarn and tosses the ball to any other player. Your youngster must pay attention so he'll be ready when the ball comes his way. Toss it back and forth enough times, and your child will be delighted by a giant web of yarn!



- Try this classic game that requires focus. You'll need three cups and a small toy like a plastic frog. While your youngster watches, put the toy under one cup. Now slide the cups around for 30 seconds, constantly mixing up their order. Can your child tell you which cup the toy is under?

Then, let him try to stump you. *Idea:* For a bigger challenge, increase the time or add more cups.♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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