

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

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West Salem Elementary School

Ryan G. Rieber, Principal - Lisa Gerke, Assoc Principal

SHORT NOTES



Heads or tails logic

This brainteaser will encourage your youngster to think logically. Have each family member line up four pennies with heads facing up. The challenge is to turn them all to tails. The catch? Flip over exactly three pennies each time. Who can do it in the fewest number of tries?

A day in the life

What would life be like if your child were a shoe? How about a bicycle? Suggest that he write a diary entry from an object's point of view. Prompt him to imagine and write details about what the shoe or bike would see, hear, feel, and think.

Summer plans

Day camps and other summer programs often fill up fast. If you're looking for one for your child, consider signing up soon. Ask her school about programs—some may be free depending on your income. Also, browse the parks and recreation catalog or website for summer programs that match your youngster's interests.

Worth quoting

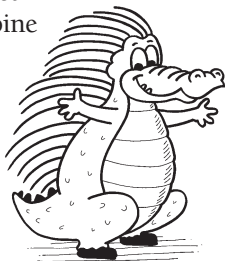
"The beautiful thing about learning is nobody can take it away from you."

B. B. King

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do you get if you cross a porcupine with an alligator?

A: I don't know, but you probably shouldn't hug it.



Standardized test success

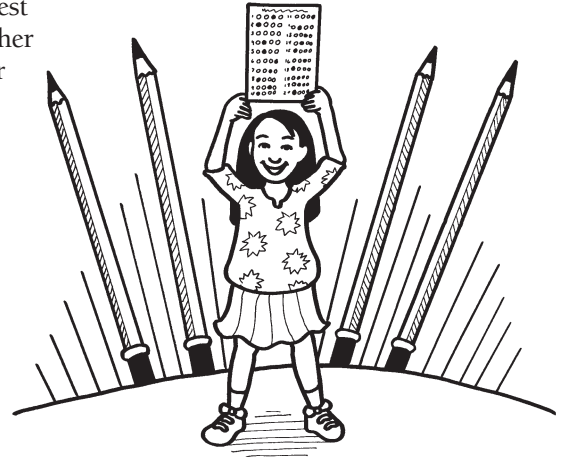
Doing well on a standardized test starts way before your child's teacher says, "You may begin." Boost your youngster's confidence and help her do her best with these tips.

Focus on schoolwork

The work habits your child uses all year long are the same ones she'll need on test day. Have her keep a list of what she does well when she does schoolwork, such as double-checking math answers or proofreading her essay. The night before the test, she can give herself a "pep talk" by reviewing her list.

Try a strategy

Let your youngster practice a key test-taking strategy in a stress-free way. Make up imaginary questions like "What is a unicorn's favorite food?" List answer choices, including one that's "right" (A: rainbow sprinkles), one that seems wrong (B: coal), and two that sound possible (C: pasta, D: pizza). While the question isn't real, the strategy is—discard any



obviously wrong answers, then weigh your first instinct against the remaining choices.

Practice keyboarding

If your child will take tests on a computer, help her work on keyboarding. She might type a story she wrote or email a relative, for instance. She'll practice typing, using special keys (shift, enter), and pointing and clicking the mouse on commands (save, send). *Tip:* No computer at home? Head to the library where she can use one for free. ♥

Sports: A winning attitude

Everyone likes winning. Losing? Not so much. Regardless, here are ways your youngster can be a good sport no matter the outcome:

- Cheer each other on when good things happen ("Nice catch!"), and sympathize when they don't ("You'll get the next one!").
- Shift your child's thinking. Instead of focusing on coming in first or scoring the most goals, suggest that he work on beating his personal best.
- When you watch sports together, point out examples of good sportsmanship. Perhaps his favorite basketball player helps an opponent up after a fall. ♥



Learning as a family

Keep your youngster excited about learning by making it a family affair. With these ideas, he'll see that learning is a lifelong journey.

Interview relatives. Your child can learn from relatives who remember living through an event or a time period he's studying in history. The whole family could gather around to hear about a grandparent's experience watching the first moon landing on television.



Give a lesson. Let your child be the teacher! Say he's learning about states of matter in science. He might help you cook and point out that water turns into a gas (steam) when it boils. Or he could make ice pops to demonstrate that water changes to a solid in the freezer.

On the go. Find family outings related to what your child studies. A high school orchestra concert lets him hear more experienced musicians playing instruments he uses in music class. If he's learning ways to protect the environment, consider participating in a local watershed cleanup as a family.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Money smarts

The first time a relative sent my daughter Lauren a gift card, she spent it right away. It occurred to me that she might find it harder to part with cash than a piece of plastic. So the next time she got a gift card, I traded her bills and coins for it.

Lauren put the money in a jar to keep on her dresser and labeled it with the total. Now when we go to the store, she thinks carefully about whether she wants to dip into her jar for a pack of trading cards or a stuffed emoji. If she does, she can take out the money before our next shopping trip and write the new total on her jar.



So far this strategy is working. Lauren immediately "sees" how much she's spending—and she doesn't want her jar to be empty.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Make an engineering lab

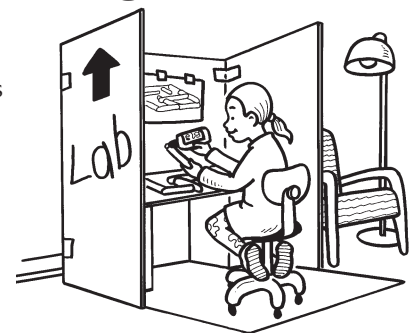
Let your child loose in her own engineering "lab" where she can design objects and solve problems as she builds them. Follow these steps.

1. Gather supplies. Help your youngster collect household objects, craft supplies, and recycling bin items to use for engineering projects. *Examples:* rubber bands, balloons, index cards, craft sticks, tape, glue, string, bottles, boxes.

2. Brainstorm projects. Together, list contraptions she might design in her lab. Can she dream up a way to create a balloon-powered boat? Or maybe she has an idea for building a marble maze.

3. Get to work. Encourage your youngster to set up her lab in a corner of the family room, pick a project from her list, and get started.

Idea: Spark new projects and solutions by having her add supplies from time to time, such as bubble wrap or a cut-up pool noodle.♥



Q & A

Anxiety in children

Q: *I've been hearing about kids being diagnosed with anxiety disorders. My son tends to worry a lot. How can I tell the difference between normal worrying and a serious problem?*

A: Some anxiety is just part of everyday life. For example, it's perfectly natural if your child is nervous about giving a speech in class or worries that a friend is angry with him over a disagreement.

With an anxiety disorder, those feelings interfere with daily life. Talk to your son's doctor if you notice any symptoms, which include difficulty sleeping, loss of appetite, unexplained stomachaches or headaches, irritability, trouble concentrating, and avoiding regular activities.

If the doctor suspects an anxiety disorder, your child may be referred to a therapist who will work with him on new ways to react to things that worry him.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
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