

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

December 2018

West Salem Elementary School

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SHORT NOTES

Put memory to work

Many card games build *working*, or short-term, memory. This kind of memory lets your youngster remember and use information he learned recently. Play Go Fish or Crazy Eights together. By keeping track of which cards have been played, your child will make better moves!

Taking the lead

You may have heard the phrase “a born leader.” But leadership skills, such as speaking up and taking initiative, can be learned. Encourage your youngster to practice during group projects. For example, she might suggest a way to divide up tasks or offer to give the introduction during the group’s class presentation.

Busy parents can volunteer

Whether you have a little time or a lot, you can pitch in at your child’s school. Ask teachers and PTO or PTA officers for ways to volunteer that fit your schedule. Maybe you’ll listen to students read for 20 minutes during your lunch break or compile families’ book catalog orders on the weekend.

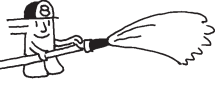
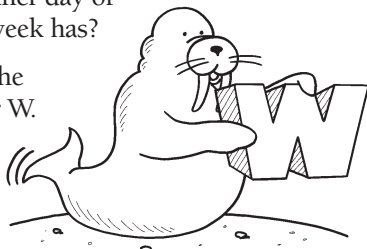
Worth quoting

“If opportunity doesn’t knock, build a door.” *Milton Berle*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What does Wednesday have that no other day of the week has?

A: The letter W.



Smart discipline

Disciplining your child is all about guidance. You’re training her to follow rules and behave in an acceptable way—without your nagging or yelling. Consider these strategies to make discipline easier and more effective.

Stay positive

Rather than telling your youngster what she *can’t* do, try explaining what she *can* do. Instead of “Don’t shove your brother,” you might say, “Keep your hands to yourself, and politely ask Billy to move out of the way.” Giving your child clear instructions will inspire her to cooperate.

Watch body language

When you correct your youngster, speak face-to-face rather than calling to her from across the room or another part of the house. You could get down on her level, gently touch her shoulder, and speak softly. Sensing that you’re in control of yourself will keep her calm so she focuses on what you’re saying.



Be consistent

If your child breaks a rule, announce a consequence right away. This helps her see cause and effect. For example, if she eats in the living room and that’s not allowed, ask her to vacuum up the crumbs right away. *Tip:* Being consistent with consequences shows that you’re serious. If she knows you won’t change your mind, she’ll be better about sticking to the rules.♥

Engineering at play

Every time your youngster has fun on the playground swings, he has engineers to thank! Let him explore engineering for himself by constructing a play swing set.

He might use craft sticks for the frame, yarn for the chains, and cardboard for the seat.

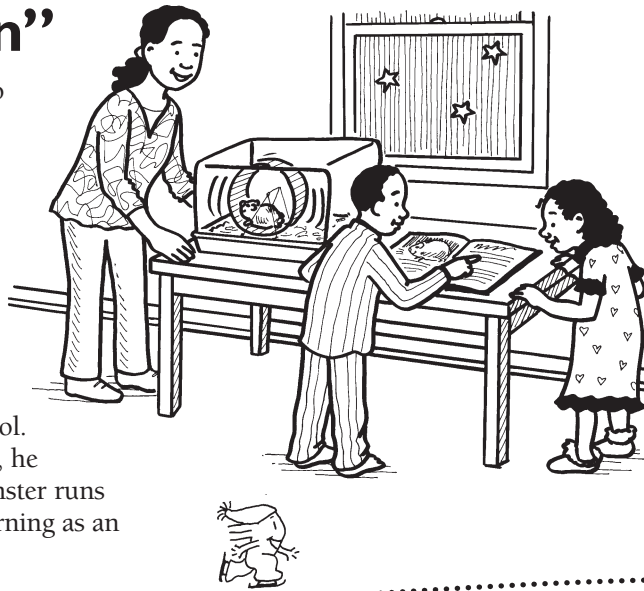
How could he make a swing that gives a longer “ride”? Suggest that he adjust the length of the “chains,” and then test it each time. He can set a timer for one minute, pull back the seat, and count the swings per minute. What does he notice? (The shorter the chains, the more swings per minute.)♥



“I love to learn”

Children devote more energy to learning when they're motivated. These ideas will boost your youngster's thirst for knowledge.

Show enthusiasm. Tell your child what you learn. (“I found out that about 90 percent of the world's population lives in the Northern Hemisphere!”) Also, ask him to teach you information he learns in school. If he's studying nocturnal animals, he might explain to you why his hamster runs on its wheel at night. He'll see learning as an



everyday activity for kids and grown-ups, and your attitude will be contagious.

Inspire curiosity. Express interest when your youngster poses questions. If he asks why we get the hiccups or whether owls really are wise, you could say, “That's a good question! Let's find out together.” Then, help him look up the topic in a library book or online. When you discover the answer, encourage him to share it with friends or relatives so they can learn more, too.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Frosty science

With this experiment, your child can see frost and learn why people sprinkle salt on icy sidewalks and roads.

How? Have your youngster rinse out two empty soup cans, remove the labels, and fill each halfway with ice. She should stir $\frac{1}{4}$ cup salt into just one can and set both cans aside.



What happens? After 10 minutes, she'll notice frost on the “salty can” and water on the other one.

Why? Salt lowers the melting point of the ice, so the can with salt got colder than the other can. When water in the air condensed onto the cans, it froze into frost on the one with salt. That's why salt is useful in winter—it melts snow and ice, making it safer to walk or drive.♥

Q & A

Grit: A family challenge

Q: My son wanted to learn to ice skate, but he changed his mind after he fell one time. How can I teach him not to give up when something is tough?

A: Children (and adults) may believe they should be able to easily do whatever they try right away. Understanding that setbacks are normal will help your son develop *grit*, or perseverance toward long-term goals.

Talk about times when you were successful even though you struggled at first. Maybe you were afraid to put your face in the water but you learned to swim by taking lessons and working hard to overcome your fear.

Then, consider having a “family grit challenge.” Each person can choose one thing to tackle that is hard for him and requires persistence, such as following a fitness routine or cutting back on screen time. Compare notes after a month, and then set your next goals!♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Making a difference

I wanted my daughter, Charlotte, to learn about the importance of helping our community.

While grocery shopping one day, we saw a sign announcing that each customer could pick a favorite charity for the store to support. I let Charlotte choose, and she decided on a non-profit that benefits kids with cancer. Now every time we buy groceries, she reminds me that we're helping sick children.

That led us to think of other ways kids can make a difference. Recently, we decided to bake brownies and take them to the fire station. I explained that this would show appreciation for the hard work that firefighters do.



Charlotte felt proud when the firefighters thanked her. I realized that the more ways we can find to serve our community, the more likely it will become a habit as she gets older.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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