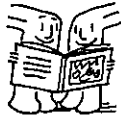


# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

## CONNECTION®

March 2017



J. Fred Sparke Elementary School  
Penny E. Fisher, Principal

### SHORT NOTES

#### Which way?

Improve your youngster's sense of direction by having her observe the sunset from a window in your home—that's west. Then, let her make north, south, east, and west signs to hang on the walls. Next, hide a toy, and give her directions to find it. ("Take two steps south and three steps east.") When you walk outdoors, she can try using the sun to figure out directions.

#### Use medicine safely

Teach your child about drug safety from an early age. If medicine is prescribed for him, read the label together, and explain that it's important to take it exactly as directed. Then, dispense doses yourself, and store it in a locked cabinet. Also, tell him he should never share medication—or accept medicine from a friend.

#### DID YOU KNOW?

The first day of spring (March 20) is also World Storytelling Day.

Celebrate it by spending an evening telling family stories. Your youngster will probably enjoy hearing tales from your childhood—or the story of the day she was born.

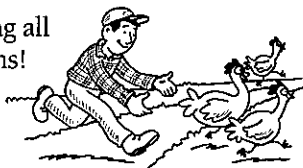
#### Worth quoting

"Sunshine is delicious, rain is refreshing, wind braces us up, snow is exhilarating; there is really no such thing as bad weather, only different kinds of good weather." *John Ruskin*

### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What was the farmer doing on the other side of the road?

**A:** Catching all the chickens!



## The importance of helping others

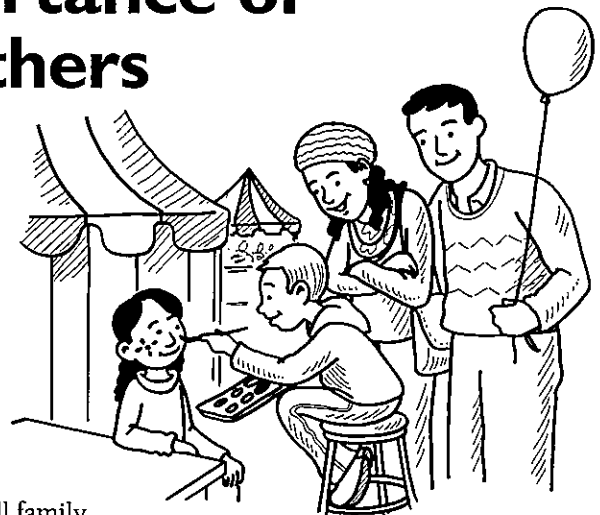
Your child will discover that the world is a better place when people help each other. Consider these ideas for raising a helpful youngster.

#### Take on chores

Helping starts at home, and regular chores are a good place to begin. Point out that your household runs more smoothly when all family members help take care of it. Get your child in the habit of everyday chores (washing dishes, folding laundry). Then, suggest that he look for other ways to help, perhaps cleaning the attic or weeding the garden.

#### Assist classmates

Let your youngster see that he has the power to help others. If he mentions someone who might need help (say, a classmate who is struggling with math facts), ask, "What could you do?" Your child could invite the student to study with him. Tell your youngster about



everyday ways you lend a hand, such as bringing morning coffee to a coworker who broke her ankle.

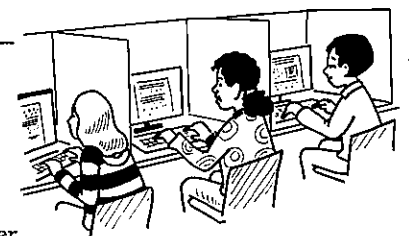
#### Volunteer together

Your child can be a community volunteer with your help. For ideas, contact the parks and recreation department, community centers, and service agencies like the United Way. Your family might take part in a park cleanup day, be a foster family for rescue dogs, or do face painting at a fund-raiser. When your youngster sees how good it feels to make a difference, he may want to make volunteering a habit! ♥

### Tips for test day

Good news: Everyday strategies your youngster uses in reading and math will come in handy on standardized tests. Here's how:

- Help your child prepare for sections where she has to read paragraphs, answer questions, and give supporting details. When you read to her at home, talk about the book, and ask her to show you *evidence* to back up her ideas and opinions.
- Your youngster may be asked to show how she solves math problems during the test, just like she does on regular assignments. Tell her that it's better to write too much rather than not enough, especially if the test isn't timed. She might also include drawings, such as a sketch showing how she found the area of a trapezoid. ♥



## It's cool to learn new words!

At home or on the go, your youngster can expand her vocabulary. Try these suggestions.

**My word wall.** Many classrooms have word walls—why not let your child make one at home? Her closet door, a side of the refrigerator, or any other open spot will do. She could write words she



is learning on index cards and arrange them by category. *Examples:* History words (*expansion, treaty*), science terms (*photosynthesis, mineral*). Each time she adds a word to her wall, ask her what it means. Then, she can refer to the wall as she does her homework or writes stories.

### ACTIVITY CORNER

## Structural engineering

Your child will have fun exploring engineering with homemade building blocks. Share these steps.

### 1. Make triangle blocks

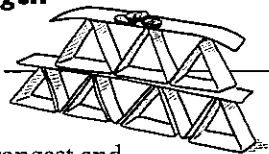
Let him cut poster board, file folders, or index cards into 24 strips, each about 1" x 5". Then, have him fold each strip into thirds, bend it into a triangle, and tape the ends together. (*Note:* He should save a few unfolded strips to use for building.)

### 2. Build a structure

Encourage your youngster to experiment with different designs. He can fit triangles together into rows with every other block pointing up, lay an unfolded strip on top, and continue alternating layers. Perhaps he'll make the rows all the same length or make them different lengths.

### 3. Test strength

Ask your child to check each structure to see which design is the strongest and most stable. He could put a strip of paper on top and add pennies, counting as he goes, until the structure topples. Which arrangement of blocks holds the most pennies?♥

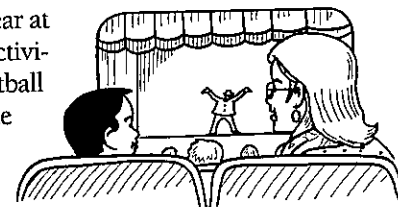


that letter (*grass, gazebo, girl*). If you say an unfamiliar word, point out the item so she learns it. When you reach the next block, someone else can pick a different letter. *Tip:* Later, help her remember the words by asking questions like "What was that round wooden structure that started with G?" (*gazebo*)♥

### PARENT TO PARENT

## Spring events: A family affair

The last quarter of the year at my son Andy's school is always filled with fun activities like plays, concerts, a student-teacher basketball game, the book fair, and curriculum nights. I like to attend or take Andy to as many as possible, but I'm a single mom with two jobs, so we usually end up missing some.



This year, I sent the calendar of events to my mom, my brother, and my cousin, and I asked whether they could each take Andy to one. They were happy to help! My mom took Andy to the school play, and my brother is going with him to the basketball game. My cousin, who's studying to become a teacher, is excited about literacy night.

I'm relieved that my son will attend so many evening activities. And Andy looks forward to sharing his school events with other family members.♥

## Q & A Encourage good school behavior

**Q:** My daughter has been misbehaving in school. The teacher sent home a note saying she's goofing off and not listening. What should I do?

**A:** First, contact your child's teacher. Find out when your daughter tends to act up, maybe during silent reading time, in the hallway, or at lunch. Together, you and the teacher might be able to figure out what triggers the behavior. Perhaps she

is struggling in a particular subject, or maybe sitting beside her best friend makes it a challenge for her to follow the rules.

Then, talk to your daughter about the importance of behaving well in school.

Discuss strategies for solving the problem like asking for help when an assignment is hard or sitting near different kids. Finally, plan to keep talking to your child and to stay in touch with the teacher to make sure her behavior improves.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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