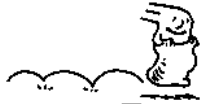


# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

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

March 2010



## SHORT NOTES

### Have courage

When your child is nervous about a class play or a doctor's appointment, remind her how she handled past situations bravely. You might say, "Remember when you were afraid to read in front of the class, and then your teacher said you did a great job?" Taking pride in her courage will help her deal with new challenges.

### Homework helper

Help your youngster make an instant homework station by folding a piece of poster board into thirds. He can set it up around him to block out distractions when he works. He can also tape handy information to it, like a multiplication table or a United States map.

### Which way?

Use everyday conversations to improve your child's sense of direction. During an after-dinner walk, point out the sunset in the west. On the highway, show her road signs (Route 1 South). *Idea:* Have her make north, south, east, and west signs. Help her hang them on the correct walls in her bedroom.

### Worth quoting

"Do not go where the path may lead. Go instead where there is no path, and leave a trail."

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Why did the dinosaur paint her toenails red?

**A:** So she could hide in the strawberry patch.



## Discipline solutions

Does your child sometimes test the limits you set for him? It's easy to get frustrated when he doesn't listen to you. But having a clear plan for handling misbehavior can help you stay calm and get him back on track more quickly. Try these suggestions.

### Communicate clearly.

If you find yourself repeating instructions several times before your youngster "hears" you, try getting his attention first. You might gently touch him on the shoulder and say his name. When he makes eye contact, state exactly what you need him to do ("Please walk—don't run—in the house").

**Explain rules.** Your child will be more likely to follow rules if he understands the reasons for them. But trying to explain while he's misbehaving can lead to an argument. Instead, wait until he's calm. Then say, for instance, "You have to ask permission before you go outside so I know where you are." Also, let him



know the consequence of breaking a rule (staying inside for 30 minutes).

**Look for reasons.** When your youngster has a day where he keeps getting into trouble, find out if something is bothering him. *Example:* "You seem out of sorts today. Do you want to talk about it?" Perhaps he argued with a friend or got a low grade on a book report. Talking about his problems lets him see that you care—and may help break the cycle of misbehavior. ♥

## Test tips

Spring is the time for standardized tests at many schools. If your youngster is taking one soon, share these tips:

- For multiple-choice items, suggest that she try to answer the question without looking at the responses first. Then, she can check to see if her choice is among the answers. If it is, it's probably correct. If she doesn't know an answer, she should guess. Chances are her first instinct will be right.
- On reading-comprehension sections (a passage followed by questions), suggest that she read the questions first. That way, she'll know what she's looking for when she reads the paragraph.

**Tip:** Encourage your youngster to try her best, but remind her that it's okay if she doesn't know all the answers. ♥



# Wonderful words

A good vocabulary will help your youngster do better in all subjects. You can play these games to increase the number of words she knows and uses:

- Teach your child to find words inside words. On separate sheets of paper, have each family member write his or her full name (first, middle, last). Set a timer for five minutes. See how many words players can make using the letters in their own names.
- Stretch your youngster's thinking while teaching her about letter patterns. The first player says a word with four letters (*late*). The



next person changes just one letter to make a new word (*date*). Continue playing as long as possible.

- Help your child find interesting words in stories. Secretly choose a book she knows, write down 5–10 favorite words from the pages, and read the list to her. Can she guess the book? Talk about why you liked each word (“*Suspect sounds sneaky*, and the suspect in a mystery is *sneaky*”) and what it means (someone accused of doing something). Then, let her select words from a book for you. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Musical glasses

Your child will have fun making music—and learn about sound—with this experiment.

**Materials:** 3 identical glasses, water, spoon

Let your youngster fill three drinking glasses with different amounts of water. He can fill one glass three-quarters full, another half full, and a third glass one-quarter full.



Then, have him tap on the side of each glass with a spoon. What happens? They each make a slightly different sound. Water makes the glass vibrate faster, causing a higher-pitched sound. Less water causes slower vibrations and a lower-pitched sound.

Next, give your child more glasses, and encourage him to experiment with different amounts of water to create more sounds. He might even play a simple tune like “*Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*” or “*Row, Row, Row Your Boat*.” ♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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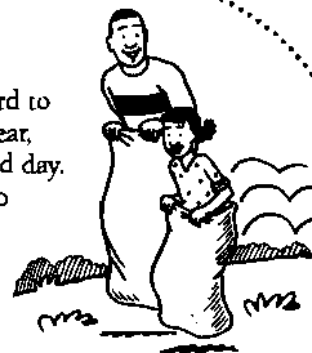
## PARENT TO PARENT

### Family field day

Our daughter Molly looks forward to field day in school every year. Last year, she came up with the idea of starting our own family field day. It turned out to be a great workout—and an ideal way to spend time together.

Molly chose a few of her favorite events, including the three-legged race, the sack race, and the egg-and-spoon relay. Then, on a warm spring afternoon, I invited my sister and her kids over for our field day.

We divided into teams and did relays at a field in our neighborhood. We used pillowcases for sacks and golf balls as eggs. Molly even taught us the sponge relay. We soaked up water from a bucket with sponges and then ran across the field to squeeze the sponges into another bucket. Our family field day was so much fun that we're planning another one this year! ♥



## Q & A

### Looking beyond stereotypes

**Q:** My son Dylan told me that he doesn't like a boy in his class because he's from a different country. What should I say?

**A:** This is a good time to discuss stereotypes and try to teach your child about tolerance and diversity. You can explain that a stereotype is a judgment made about a member of a particular group without really knowing the person. And since each person is an individual, stereotypes are unfair. For example, you

could say, he wouldn't want people making an assumption about him based on his appearance or background.

Encourage Dylan to tell you how he feels about his classmate. He might say, “He's not like me.” Then, suggest that he try playing with him at recess or invite him over to work on a school project. Once your son spends a little time with him, he may discover that they're more alike than he thought. ♥

