

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

May 2016

Little Falls Special Services



SHORT NOTES

Laughing together

Telling jokes with your youngster is a fun way to build family bonds. And jokes that involve word-play can boost his vocabulary. Look for joke books at the library, and take turns reading aloud from them. If he doesn't "get" a joke, explain the different meanings of the words—he'll see that a bigger vocabulary means bigger laughs!

Motivated 'til the last day

It might be a challenge for your child to stay focused as the school year winds down. Inspire her to continue doing her best by having her compare a journal entry or math test from the beginning of the year with a recent one. Seeing how far she has come may motivate her to keep going.

Wear your seat belt

Before you drive away, remind everyone in your car to buckle up—and check riders in the backseat. Don't allow youngsters to place shoulder belts behind their backs, and set an example by always wearing yours correctly. Also, tell your child to buckle up in other people's cars, even if the driver doesn't insist.

Worth quoting

"The only person you are destined to become is the person you decide to be." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

JUST FOR FUN



Q: What invention lets you look right through a wall?

A: A window.

Summer learning: Anytime, anywhere

School may be out, but learning is not! Encourage your child to keep learning all summer long with these ideas for at home or on the go.

Whiteboard in a bag

Here's a tool your youngster can use everywhere. Let her make a "whiteboard" by sliding white paper into a gallon-sized zipper bag. Drop in washable markers and a small package of wipes. You might give her words to spell or math problems to solve. Or have her draw and write about what she sees out the car window. She can write on the sealed bag, use the wipes to erase, and start again.

Show-and-tell table

Set aside a small table where family members can share discoveries. For instance, your child could bring back an interesting rock from a walk or take a photo of an unusual insect on the back



porch. Or you might add a news article about a cool invention. Keep the table going all summer—talk about the items, rotate them, and learn together.

Reading staycations

Together, dream up imaginary vacations to take at home, and read fiction and nonfiction books to go with your choices. For example, make a tent with chairs and a sheet, and read about camping. Or wear leis and flowered shirts while enjoying a story set on a tropical island. Your youngster may even like to "time travel" to ancient Egypt with books on hieroglyphics. *Note:* Ask your child's teacher or a librarian for book suggestions. ♥

For the teacher...

These teacher-appreciation projects are a fun way to wrap up the year, and they will teach your youngster to think of others:

- Get a plastic craft or tackle box with different-sized compartments. Let your child fill it with dollar-store treats his teacher would like, such as travel-size lotion, sticky notes, or lip balm. Then, he can decorate the lid with "Thank you," his name, and the date.
- Have him pick out a packet of flower or vegetable seeds. Suggest that he use permanent marker to personalize a flowerpot and place the seed packet inside along with a thank-you note. ♥



Raise resilient kids

Coping with changes, bouncing back from disappointment...youngsters who are resilient are able to do these things more easily. Here are everyday ways to help your child build resilience.

Form strong connections. Kids who have close relationships with loving adults tend to be more resilient. Regularly show affection for your youngster, and point out what's special about him. ("You're always so kind to animals.") Also, show interest in activities he enjoys, whether it's playing trumpet or collecting trading cards.



Practice coping skills. Raising a resilient child doesn't mean shielding him from everything that's difficult.

Instead, it means helping him learn to cope. If his soccer team loses, say something like, "I know you're disappointed. It's hard to lose, isn't it?"

Then, tell him about a time you felt let down, whether you lost a tennis match or didn't get a job you wanted. Your youngster will discover that struggling—and moving forward—is a normal part of life. And getting through it can help him deal with adversity next time.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Let the story unfold

Keep your child's creative writing skills sharp with these activities that will hold her interest until the very last line.

1. Have your youngster cut out a dozen random words or phrases from newspaper and magazine headlines. *Examples:* *ice age, mystery.* Let her shake them in a bag, pull out one at a time, and use them to write the lines of a story. ("Not another *ice age!*" Simon told his friend. "We need to solve the *mystery* of why it's so cold.") When she has used all her words, listen while she reads her tale to you.

2. Ask your child to make up a story title (say, "The Big Thunderstorm" or "The Day the Zoo Animals Escaped"). Then,

she could write one part—beginning, middle, or end—and have family members write the other parts. When everyone finishes, she can put the pieces together, adding transitions to connect them logically.♥



Q & A

Too much togetherness?

Q: Last year, my girls' behavior really deteriorated over the summer. I think they were tired of being together.

How can I make this summer more pleasant for everyone?

A: This is a common problem during school breaks. Even siblings who get along need space from each other.

Try to figure out "triggers"—maybe one child makes noise when her sister is on the phone or takes the last ponytail holder. Together, discuss ways to head off these situations (use the phone in another room, keep hair supplies separate).

Also, plan times for your girls to be apart. If your older child has a friend over, play a board game with your younger daughter so the big girls have time to themselves. Or if your girls start to argue, suggest that one move to the kitchen for a craft project while the other reads in the living room.

At the same time, if they find activities to enjoy together, that will make the summer more pleasant, too. They might make music videos, for instance, or take up a sport like volleyball.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Community classes

My son Eli was excited to learn about the solar system in school this year, and I want to build on his enthusiasm this summer.

We got a summer catalog in the mail from our parks and recreation department. Eli looked through it and found a few free programs about outer space. So far we've decided to attend a stargazing session with a local astronomer and a crafts class where kids make a mobile of the planets.

I also found a discount coupon for a planetarium, so we're planning a day trip there the first weekend of summer break. And of course we'll visit the library so

Eli can check out books on the planets, space missions, and astronauts.

I had no idea our community had so much to offer for Eli's new interest—looking around really paid off!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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