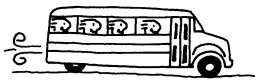
Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

September 2015

Public School 214 Q
Denise Fuccillo, Principal



SHORT NOTES

TV-free mornings
Consider keeping the TV off on school mornings. When your child is ready for school before it's time to leave, he might draw, work on a jigsaw puzzle, or sort his baseball cards instead. Doing something that actively engages his brain, rather than zoning out in front of the television, will get him ready to learn.

Family teamwork
A big project like washing the car, painting a room, cleaning out the garage, or planting a garden can teach your youngster about teamwork. Plus, it's more fun when the whole family pitches in. An added bonus: Including younger children in adult jobs builds useful skills for later.

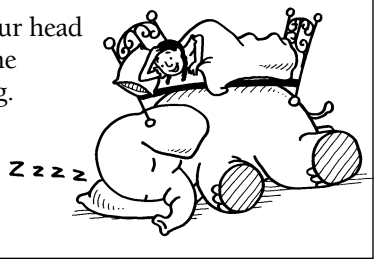
Parent education
Make parenting a little easier by arming yourself with as much information as possible. Look for free parent education nights offered by your youngster's school or in your community. For instance, you could learn about topics like discipline, nutrition, single parenting, or ADHD.

Worth quoting
"Be happy with what you have while working for what you want."
Helen Keller

JUST FOR FUN

Q: How do you know if there's an elephant under your bed?

A: Your head hits the ceiling.



Organized for success

Does your child know that being organized can help her do better in school? As she launches into the new year, here are tools and strategies for keeping track of activities, homework, and school supplies.

Use a calendar

Hang a family calendar in a handy spot, and put your youngster in charge of adding things like picture day, field trips, and study group meetings. She could also color-code days she has special classes. For instance, maybe she'll put a green dot on band day to remember her instrument and a blue dot on library day so she doesn't forget her books. Then each evening, she should check the calendar as part of her getting-ready routine.

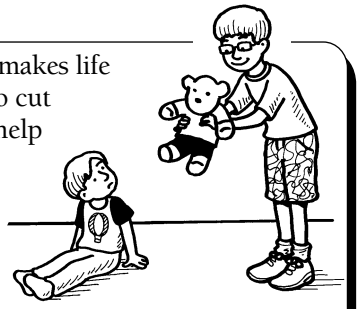
Write to-do lists

Starting each day with a to-do list is a good lifelong habit. Your child can use her student planner or a spiral notebook to make a list in the morning or the night before. She could list items in order of importance, or put stars by the most critical tasks. And she might put a time frame by each one. ("Practice presentation from 4 to 4:30 p.m.") Have her cross off each item as she accomplishes it—she'll feel a nice sense of satisfaction.

Make a "school zone"

Set aside a special spot at home where your youngster can keep everything school-related. It might be in a corner of the kitchen or a basket in her room. Then, she could stock it with items like books, supplies, paperwork, long-term projects she's working on, and the school lunch menu. Encourage her to keep the area neat so she can easily find what she needs.♥

"I know how you feel"



In the classroom and at home, showing empathy makes life more pleasant for everyone—and has been shown to cut down on bullying. With these suggestions, you can help your youngster learn to sense how others are feeling and to reach out to them.

Show empathy. When your child is sad or anxious, tell him that you understand how he feels, and share a time you felt the same way. *Example:* "My best friend moved when I was 7, and I felt lonely."

Recognize empathy. If you see your child (or someone else) being empathetic, point it out. ("You could tell your little brother was upset. It was nice of you to give him your stuffed animal to hold.") Your youngster will be inspired to show empathy for others in the future.♥

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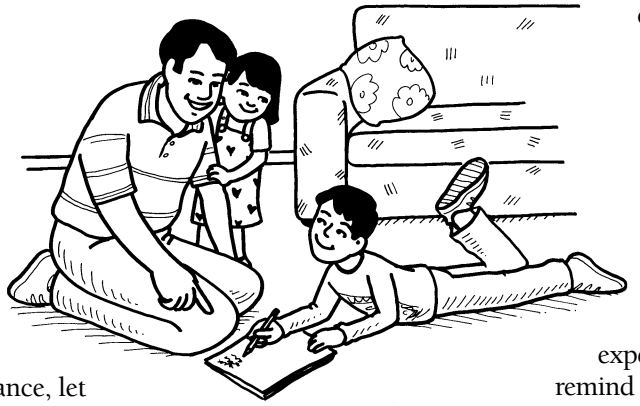
Expectations: Aim high



If you have high, yet reasonable, expectations for your child, he will be more likely to rise to them. Consider this advice for setting and communicating your expectations:

- Focus on your youngster's actions rather than his intelligence. For instance, let him know you expect him to work hard, turn in every assignment, and listen to you and his teacher (rather than "I know you're smart, so you'll get good grades").
- Remind your child of your expectations regularly. You can state them directly ("I expect you to follow the rules in class") or indirectly ("I wonder what you'll study in college"). You could also express them as encouragement: "I know you'll try your best on today's science quiz."
- Help your youngster set high expectations for himself. One way is to remind him to think of himself as a good student, perhaps by mentioning past achievements. For example, if he's experiencing writer's block, pull out a creative story that his teacher wrote a nice comment on.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Word games to go

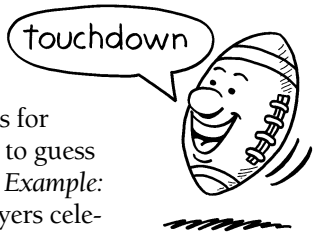
Watch your child's vocabulary grow by playing word games with her. Here are two you can enjoy anywhere you go.

Words to grow by

One person says a two-letter word, such as *do*. The next player says a three-letter word beginning with the same letter (*dog*). Then, the next person says a four-letter word that starts with the letter (*drum*). Continue until you can't think of a word that is one letter longer.

Riddle me this

Pick any word. Pretend to be the word, and give clues for other players to guess who you are. *Example:* "Football players celebrate me." "The endzone is my favorite place." "I start with *t* and end with *n*, and I have 9 letters." (*Answer: touchdown.*) ♥



Q & A

Choosing an activity

Q: *My daughter would like to try after-school activities this year. Should I sign her up for a few?*

A: Extracurricular activities are great for helping children learn new skills and make friends who share their interests. On the other hand, too big of a time commitment to after-school clubs and teams can interfere with schoolwork, family time, and just playing and being a kid.

Look over an activity list together from the school, community center, or parks department. Then, let her pick just one to start with. For example, she might choose a running club, an arts and crafts group, or a student council committee. If she's interested in more than one, she could try one now and add another if she successfully juggles everything. You can support her by working out rides home, attending events, and asking her how it's going.♥

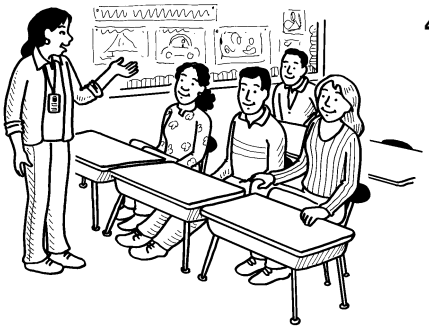
Steps to parent-teacher teamwork

Start the year off on the right foot with these four ideas for getting to know your youngster's teacher.

1. Try to meet the teacher as early in the year as possible—back-to-school night is a good opportunity. You'll get an overview of your child's daily routine and what he'll be learning, and you'll show the teacher you want to work together.

2. Find out the best way to stay in touch (notes, emails, phone calls). Communicate regularly so it will be easier to reach out with questions or concerns.

3. Tell the teacher about your youngster's home life. You could write a note introducing your child and your family. ("Andy loves science and music. He and his big sister are at their dad's house every other weekend.")



4. Ask what you can do at home or in the school building to help your youngster and the teacher. She might offer tips for reading aloud to your child or invite you to volunteer in the classroom.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1540-5621

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