Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2021

Parkland School District

Title I Program



SHORT NOTES

"How-to" writing

Here's a fun way for your child to practice writing explanations. Ask him to list step-by-step instructions for creating something out of play dough—without telling you what the object is. Follow his directions exactly as written. Is your object the one he intended?

Apologies in action

When your youngster needs to apologize, explain that taking responsibility for her actions means more than just saying "I'm sorry." For instance, if she loses pieces to her brother's board game, she might use her own money to replace the game or offer to make homemade game pieces.

DID YOU KNOW?

People blink less than usual while staring at a computer screen. And that can lead to dry eyes and eyestrain. Encourage your child to take "blink breaks" when he's online. He might look away from the screen and blink several times while he waits for a program to open, for example.

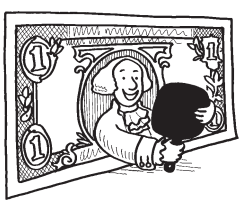
Worth quoting

"A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees."
Amelia Earhart

JUST FOR FUN

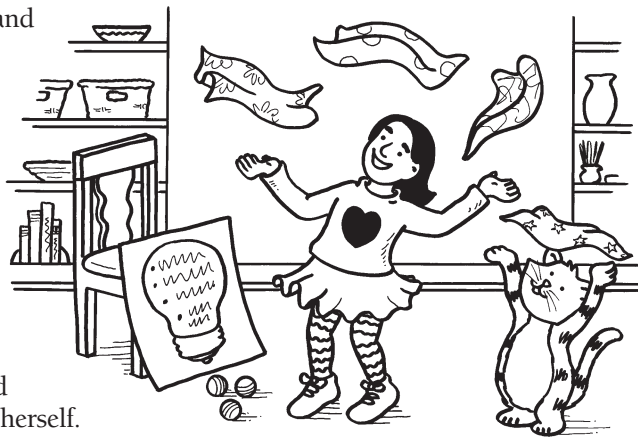
Q: What's the easiest way to double a dollar?

A: Put it in front of a mirror.



The nitty-gritty on grit

Children who have grit are able to overcome setbacks and stick with challenges. Nurture your youngster's persistence with these ideas.



Be independent

Let your child do as much as possible for herself. Maybe her smoothie is lumpy or the gift she wraps is messy, but resist the urge to fix them. You'll show her that you believe in her—and that will help her believe in herself.

Find "lightbulb" moments

A comic-strip artist might draw a lightbulb to show that a character has a "bright" idea. When your youngster struggles to learn something (say, how to juggle), suggest that she draw a lightbulb and fill it with steps to success. *Examples:* "Learn to juggle scarves first." "Juggle one ball at a time."

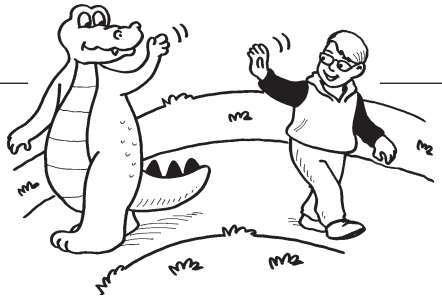
Declare a "do-over"

Remind your child that a setback simply means she needs more practice. For instance, if she's showing you how she can do a cartwheel but doesn't land on her feet, declare a "do-over." She'll learn that it's okay to try again and again.

Use self-motivation

Kids tend to stick with things they're interested in, and that teaches them the rewards of perseverance. Steer your youngster toward projects that fit her passions. If she wants to design video games someday, you might help her find a coding class or an online tutorial.♥

Attention, please!



These kid-friendly activities can stretch your child's attention span:

- Play "Spot the Difference." Draw two nearly identical pictures. Perhaps you'll sketch two pizzas with a pepperoni in a different spot or a different number of mushrooms. Tell your youngster how many differences there are. Can he find them all?
- "See you later, alligator." "After 'while, crocodile." With your child, take turns thinking of ways to say "goodbye"—each should rhyme and mention an animal. *Examples:* "Gotta go, armadillo." "In a few, kangaroo." How long can your youngster stay focused as you go back and forth?♥

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Big project, big success

School projects give your child a chance to be creative as he shows what he has learned. Share these tips for successful projects from start to finish.



Make a connection. Your youngster will learn more—and be more motivated to work hard—if he picks a topic he cares about. Say he's asked to write a report on pioneer days. He might focus on daily life as a pioneer kid or on popular games from that time.

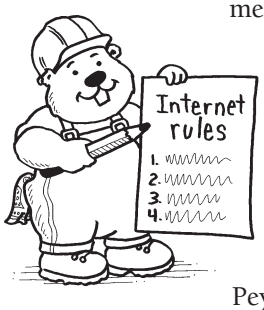
Break it down. Suggest that your child think of a big project as a series of smaller assignments. He can set a deadline for each step, including researching, writing, and revising. Remind him to leave some wiggle room in case a task takes longer than he anticipated.

Add flair. How could your youngster make his project stand out? Encourage him to include extras like models, posters, or audio or video clips. Maybe he'll make a cardboard model of a one-room schoolhouse like those many pioneer children attended. If his project includes a class presentation, he could demonstrate a game from the time period like jackstraws (similar to pickup sticks).♥

PARENT TO PARENT Online safety 101

My daughter Peyton does many things online these days—from going to school to hanging out with her friends. I was worried about her safety, so I found an online cyber safety course at *sos.fbi.gov/en/*, and we took it together.

We were both surprised by what we learned. For instance, online contests can be used to collect names and email addresses. And who knew that social media quizzes can trick you into sharing your birth month or pet's name to help hackers figure out your passwords?



After our class, Peyton made an illustrated list of rules to keep by the computer. Her rules include blocking sites that aren't kid friendly, not sharing passwords with friends, and asking my permission before downloading anything. Now, both of us are more careful when we work and play online.♥

Q & A Handling cheating

Q: *My son got caught giving his friend answers during a test and received a zero. How should I handle this at home?*



A: Start by asking your child why he cheated. If he says he just wanted to help his friend, explain that cheating is always wrong—regardless of the reason. Also, it doesn't actually help anyone. Your son got a zero on his test, and his friend didn't learn that studying is the right way to earn a good grade.

Or if your youngster felt pressured to share the answer, help him plan what to do the next time someone asks him to cheat. He might simply say, "Sorry, I can't," and keep his eyes on his own paper. Later, he could suggest they study together for the next test.

Finally, let your child know what the consequences will be at home if he cheats again (say, losing electronics for a certain period of time).♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Math squares: A brain workout

Boost your youngster's spatial reasoning—an important part of success in geometry—with this fun brainteaser.

1. Have your child cut out five squares, all the same size, from construction paper.

2. Now she can position the squares to form different *pentominoes*: arrangements of five squares in which each square shares at least one side with another square. Can she find all 12 possible pentominoes? (If she gets stuck, help her search online for "pentominoes.")



3. After your youngster makes each pentomino, she can draw it on graph paper so she remembers which ones she has found.

Challenge: Ask your child to cut out the pentominoes she drew on graph paper. Now she can arrange all 12 into a big square with a square hole in the middle.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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