

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

December 2013

Westfield Washington School District

SHORT NOTES

Look ahead

Suggest that your youngster use winter break to get a head start on the new year. She could clean out folders and binders or organize her desk, for instance. If she has a long-term project coming up, she might start working on it now. Doing just one small task each day will make a difference in January.

Mistakes can teach

When you make a mistake, consider telling your child what happened and what you learned. *Example:* "I ran out of gas today. From now on, I'm going to refill when there's a quarter-tank left." You'll show him that everyone makes mistakes—and encourage him to see them as learning opportunities.

Calendar gift

A homemade calendar makes a great gift from your youngster. She could print blank calendar pages from the Internet or cut them from an inexpensive calendar. Then, on separate sheets, have her paint her own picture for each month. She can staple the pages together in order and decorate a cover.

Worth quoting

"It's easier to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top." *Henry Ward Beecher*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What gets bigger and bigger the more you take away from it?

A: A hole!



Learn as a family

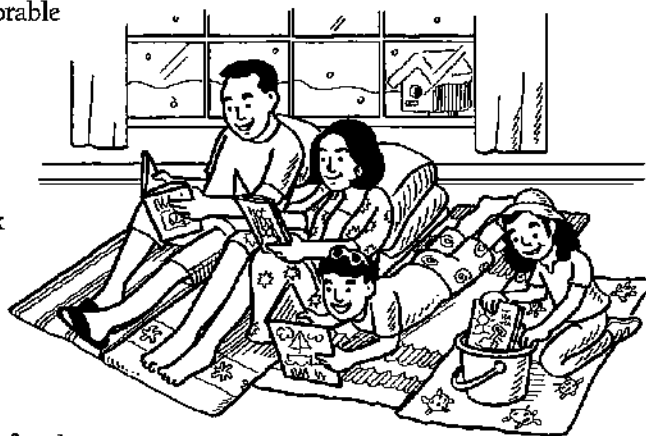
Make this winter memorable with fun parent-and-child activities. Try these ideas that combine family time with learning.

Read in season

Let your youngster pick a season, and hold a read-a-thon based on his choice. For summer, you could wear shorts and T-shirts and lounge on beach towels in the living room while each family member reads a beach story. If he picks fall, you might "camp"—pitch a tent by draping sheets over chairs, eat s'mores, and read aloud from an outdoor adventure novel.

Hold how-to nights

Celebrate talents and skills by sharing them with each other. Take turns giving lessons on your "specialties." Your child can teach everyone how to draw a picture of a dog. Or the carpenter in the family could demonstrate how to measure and saw wood or use a hammer or drill. Everyone will learn new skills—



and appreciate the things their family members know!

Plan a "trip"

Staying home this winter break? Make geography into an activity, and plan a pretend trip together. Get travel brochures, or cut pictures of interesting places from old magazines. Then, find the cities and countries on a world map, and calculate the distance from home. Look in library books or online to find sights to see and to learn about the climate, language, currency, and food. You could even design your own brochure for your dream destination. ♥

Show respect

The holiday season is full of opportunities for your youngster to practice something that is important all year long—respect! Here are some examples:

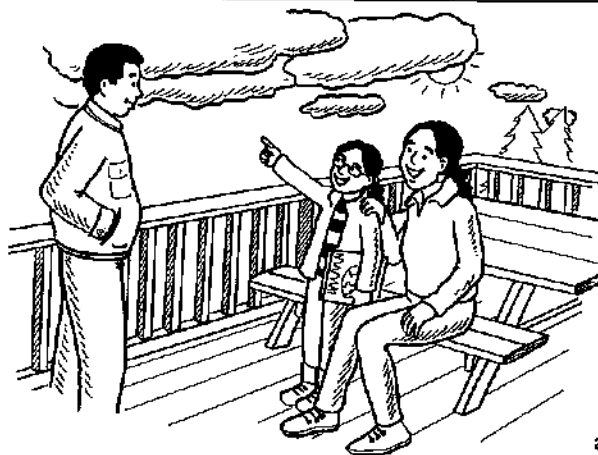
- Talk about respect before a get-together. Explain that she should offer her seat to an adult who is standing. Also, if your child isn't used to using titles ("Aunt," "Mr."), discuss this before visiting someone who prefers them. ("The people you'll meet like to be called by Mr. or Mrs.")
- Encourage your youngster to respect other cultures and traditions. If a friend observes a different holiday, she can wish the person a nice celebration. She might also point out something they have in common ("We have tons of relatives in town, too"). ♥



Good study habits

There's more to studying than reading a chapter or reviewing a list of words. Help your youngster study *actively* with these three tips.

1. Begin at the end. If your child has a textbook chapter to study, she can start by reading the questions at the back. That way, she'll be on the lookout for key facts.



2. Keep paper and pencil handy. Suggest that your youngster make notes while she studies. She might jot down names, dates, or formulas, for example. This will help her understand and remember what she is reading. And if there's a part that confuses her, she can write questions to ask her teacher.

3. Link it to real life. The material will be more meaningful—and easier to remember—if your child sees how it applies to her life. Say she's learning about different types of clouds. Have her spot them in the sky and try to predict what kind of weather they'll bring.♥

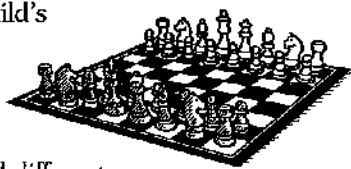
Q & A Managing learning disabilities

Q: My son doesn't like getting help for his learning disability. He'll even leave test answers blank instead of taking the extra time he's allowed. What should I do?

A: Your child's behavior is normal—kids this age don't want to feel different from their classmates. First, make sure he knows what's included in his learning plan. Explain that you and his teachers agreed on the accommodations to help him learn and do his best work.

Then, suggest that he set goals for himself so he can feel more in control of his learning disability. Also, talk to his teacher. She might have ideas for encouraging him to use the help he's entitled to. For instance, she may know a successful older student with a learning disability who would be willing to talk to your son.

Tip: Guide him toward an activity he can feel good about (sports, chess). That could boost his self-esteem and make him feel more confident about accepting help in school.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Work together

Whether your child is doing a group project or playing Hacky Sack, a team effort is needed. Everyone's a winner with these games that will show him teamwork in action.



Lower the yardstick. Together, hold a yardstick horizontally so that everyone has one finger underneath. Then, lower the yardstick to the ground—but if anyone's finger drops away, you have to start over. See how many tries it takes to get the yardstick to the floor.

Pass the ball. Have players lie down, head to toe, in a long hallway. The first player holds a ball between his feet and lifts it so the person behind him can grab the ball with his hands. That player places the ball between his feet and passes it overhead to the next person. Begin again if anyone drops the ball. How fast can you use teamwork to move the ball down the line?♥

PARENT TO PARENT

A grandparent volunteer

Last year when my mom was in town for the holidays, she asked if she could help me with my daughter Emily's class party. I checked with the teacher, and he said he'd be happy to have a grandparent volunteer.

My mother and I set up the snacks, and she played a game with small groups of kids. The students also enjoyed

hearing what winter is like where she lives—she told stories about getting several feet of snow and being stuck inside for days.

My daughter was proud to have her grandmother at school. And my mom said she liked seeing Emily's classroom and meeting her teacher and friends. I've already gotten permission from this year's teacher for her to help out again.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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