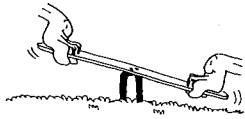


Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

Wedgeworth Elementary School
Dr Paulina Cho, Principal



SHORT NOTES

Celebrate progress

Suggest that your child create a fun reminder of all the things she has accomplished. Let her cover a container with construction paper and label it "I did it!" Then, she can write each success ("I memorized the state capitals") on a slip of paper and put it in the container. When she's feeling discouraged, have her read the slips.

Play is for everyone

Play boosts imagination and relieves stress for kids of all ages. Try to make sure your youngster has time each day that's free of structured activities. You might encourage him to take out toys he hasn't used in a while—many elementary schoolers still enjoy building with blocks or racing toy cars.

Eating together

You may have heard that it's important for families to eat dinner together. But other meals count, too. If you work in the evenings, maybe you could make time for a family breakfast. On a weekend, try a picnic lunch! Research shows that children who regularly eat meals with their families tend to do better in school and avoid risky behavior.

Worth quoting

"The best way to cheer yourself up is to try to cheer somebody else up!"
Mark Twain

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What's yellow and smells just like green paint?

A: Yellow paint.



Critical thinking

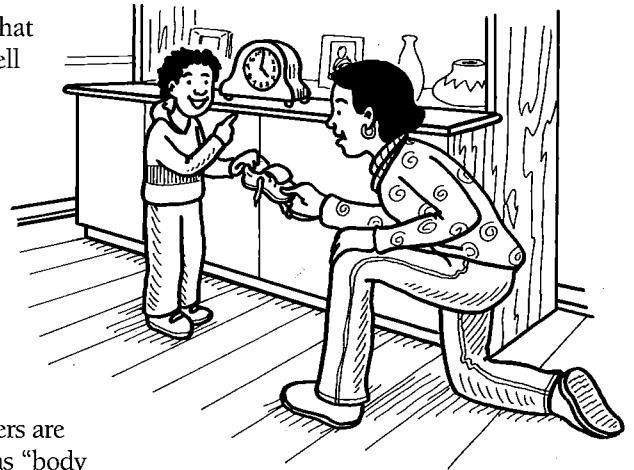
There's an important skill that can help your youngster do well in every school subject: thinking! Consider these ideas for helping him to think critically.

Spot similarities

Choose two objects in the room that don't appear to have anything in common (say, a clock and a sneaker). Ask your child to find at least one thing that's similar about them. He could say that numbers are printed on both or that each has "body parts" (the clock has a face and hands, the shoe has a tongue and a heel).

Flip a fairy tale

Critical thinkers can look at situations through different lenses. Encourage your youngster to write a fairy tale from another character's point of view. For instance, how would the wolf tell *The Three Little Pigs*? He might think of himself as hungry rather than "big and bad." If the mother pig were the narrator, how might the story be different?



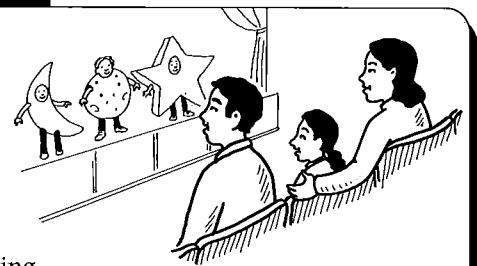
Be strategic

Games like checkers, chess, Connect Four, and Mastermind build thinking skills. Play some of these together, and share your thought process: "If I move here, you'll probably move there, and then I could capture your piece." Suggest that your child talk himself through his moves, too. *Idea:* Solo games and activities like Sudoku, Rubik's Cube, and Rush Hour can also make him a better thinker. ♥

Let's go to school tonight!

Attending evening events at school is a good way for you and your child to get more involved. Plus, she'll be happy to show you the place where she spends her day. Consider these suggestions:

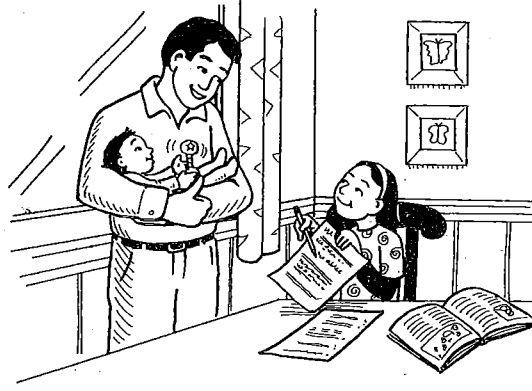
- Check the school calendar for talent shows, musicals, and plays. Try to go whether or not your youngster is performing. She'll get to see her friends on stage and perhaps be inspired to join in next year.
- Keep an eye out for parent education nights. Special programs on Internet safety or ADHD, for example, can help you with difficult issues.
- Go to a curriculum event. A literacy or math night, science fair, or cultural celebration lets your child share what she is studying in school—and the two of you can learn something new together. ♥



Three steps to homework success

You've probably noticed that your child has a little more homework each year. Help her get a handle on this year's workload with a daily plan.

- 1. Discuss.** Begin each afternoon or evening by asking what homework she has. You can set a positive tone with comments like "I loved writing in my journal when I was your age" or "It's exciting that you're old enough for long division."
- 2. Plan.** Ask your youngster what order she will do the work in. You might suggest that she finish her hardest subject or



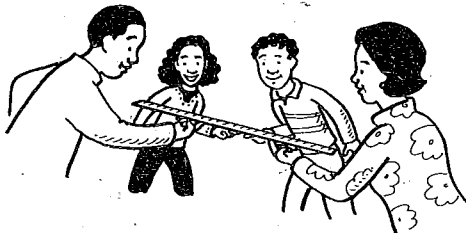
longest assignment as soon as she gets home and save easier ones for after dinner. Or perhaps she prefers to get simpler assignments out of the way so she'll have fewer tasks ahead of her. She could try each way to see which works best for her.

- 3. Review.** Look over her finished work together. You might compliment your child on something she did particularly well. Then, if you see careless mistakes, have her double-check her work—but avoid telling her any answers. Her teacher needs to know what she's able to do all by herself.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Work together

Whether your youngster 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.

Family ball pass. Sit in a circle with your feet out toward the center. Pass a ball around the circle—using only your feet. How many times can the ball go around before it drops on the ground?♥



Q & A

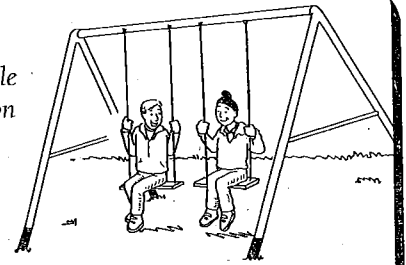
Respect differences

Q: We recently moved to an area where people speak several different languages, and our son has a lot of questions. How should we answer him?

A: It's great that your son is being exposed to a variety of cultures. You can use his curiosity to help him learn about respecting differences.

Explain that in many parts of the United States, people speak different languages, eat different foods, and wear different clothing than your family does. At the same time, they do many of the same things (play at the park, watch movies).

To help him understand, ask him to name one classmate who speaks English and one who speaks another language. Have him tell you something he has in common with each child (skateboarding, wearing sneakers) and one thing that they don't share (number of siblings, language spoken at home). He'll discover that language is just one of the many things that makes a person similar to or different from him.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Talking about money

My kids were always asking to buy things such as dress-up shoes or new games. They didn't seem to understand that these items weren't in our budget.

I wanted them to learn about how we spend our money—and that it is limited. So I got a spiral notebook and labeled it "Family Spending Journal." I explained that for two weeks, everyone would keep track of what they spent money on. I listed items like my subway fare, the

electric bill, and the taxes taken out of my paycheck. The children wrote down expenses such as school lunch, soccer cleats, and field trip fees.

After a few days, they were surprised by how many things we needed money for. Our kids had no idea, for example, that we paid for taxes on our income, several types of insurance, and membership in our homeowners' association. Sometimes they still ask to buy too many things at the store, but when I say no, at least they understand why.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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 128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
 540-636-4280 • rfcustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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