Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

Vinton Elementary School
Ms. Cindy Preston, Principal



SHORT NOTES

Picture this

Good readers form mental pictures as they read. To improve your child's comprehension, read a book without letting him see it. Then, ask him to guess what the illustrations look like. *Examples:* How are the characters dressed? Is the setting bright or gloomy?

Be there!

Regular attendance in elementary school sets up a good pattern for your youngster's entire school career. Show your child that school comes first by trying to keep days off for illnesses and family emergencies. Also, schedule routine doctor and dentist appointments for after school or over school breaks.

Line them up

Sometimes children get math problems wrong simply because they haven't lined up the numbers correctly. Try this: Have your youngster do problems on graph paper, using one box per number. Once she gets used to this system, she'll be able to transfer her lining-up skills to regular paper.

Worth quoting

"Kind words do not cost much. Yet they accomplish much." *Blaise Pascal*

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Name one important thing we have today that we didn't have 10 years ago.

Brian: Me!



Pitching in



Would you like your child to be more responsible, hardworking, and persistent? Here are ideas for working as a family to help your youngster develop these important traits.

A group approach

Thinking of herself as a "team player" can encourage your child to be responsible. Explain that your family operates as a team. Everyone must play a part to get things done. *Example:* You take her shopping for her clothes and sports equipment. She chooses her outfit each morning and keeps track of her bat and glove.

Hard workers wanted

Your youngster probably has regular chores to do. You can motivate her to work extra hard by placing "want ads" on the refrigerator. Choose a challenging job, and offer a benefit. *Example:* "Wanted—a hardworking family member to clean out a corner of the basement. Reward—a nice place for kids to play."

Sticking it out

Working toward small goals can make it easier to complete a big task. Perhaps your family room needs a fresh coat of paint. Write down the steps (move furniture and lay down drop cloths, prepare walls, roll paint on walls, paint trim). Tell your child you'll take a fun break after each step is done (go to the playground, take a bike ride).♥

Parent power

There are many ways you can support your youngster's learning and his school. Try these tips:

- Spend a few minutes every evening looking over handouts your child brings home. Fill out forms to return the next day.
- Tell your youngster's teachers if you can help them out at school or from home.
- Make sure teachers know you appreciate their efforts. From time to time, send a thank-you note or an email.
- Contact your child's teacher immediately if you see a problem. Working together will help your youngster succeed.
- Attend conferences, parent meetings, and school events regularly.♥



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Standardized tests

Choose to do well



True or false: Standardized tests are tough. The answer depends on how prepared your youngster is. Consider these four steps to help him handle test week.

1. Explain that the tests will show how much he has learned. Encourage him to try his best, but don't put so much emphasis on the tests that he feels stressed.

2. Practice the test format. For example, your child might have to read a paragraph and answer questions. Using one of his textbooks, have him look at the questions at the end of a section first and then read the passage. That will help him know what to read for and how to find the answers.

3. Limit activities the night before tests. You may want to avoid having guests for dinner, or let him skip his brother's baseball game if it means being out late. Be sure your youngster gets to bed on time and sets an alarm for the next morning.

4. On test day, give him an energy-boosting breakfast. Try to include both protein (eggs, yogurt, milk) and carbohydrates (fruit, oatmeal, toast).♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Paper bag city

Let your child create her own 3-D community. She'll practice map skills and learn about urban planning as she decides where to put the buildings in her town.

Materials: *paper lunch bags, crayons or markers, newspapers, black construction paper, scissors, tape*



Have your youngster think of buildings to include, such as a bank, a grocery store, a school, a library, and houses. She can make them by drawing doors, windows, and signs on flat bags. For every bag she decorates, have her stuff a second one with newspaper. Then, she should open each decorated bag and slide it over a stuffed bag so her "buildings" will stand up. For the roads, she can cut black construction paper into strips and tape them together.

Finally, have your child lay out her roads and arrange her buildings alongside them to make her very own town.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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Q & A Bullying: The bystander's role



Q: *My child has been coming home from school upset because kids frequently pick on a classmate and never let her play with them. What advice should I give my daughter?*

A: Tell your youngster that her classmate was being bullied—and that she may be able to help stop it!

There are several things she can do. If she feels safe, she could say something like, "That's not nice," and then ask the classmate to walk away with her. Or she might invite the child who is being bullied to join her in a game or school project.

Also, remind your youngster to report bullying to a teacher or other adult when she sees it. Let her know this is not tattling, but a way to help someone who is being hurt. You can explain: "Asking an adult to help a child who is being bullied is like asking the nurse to help a child with a scraped knee."♥

PARENT TO PARENT Thinking games

Between school, errands, and activities, my family spends lots of time on the go. I decided to use some of it for "thinking games."

I taught my kids a game my parents used to play with me, called "Would You Rather?" I offer two options and ask which they prefer and why. For example, I might say, "Would you rather live near the beach or the mountains?"

My son came up with a game he named "Three Favorites." Someone picks a category (outfits, movies), and we all tell our top three choices. My daughter thought of "What Doesn't Belong?" We take turns naming items and asking the others to explain which is the odd one out and why. The kids especially like this game because there can be more than one "right" answer. For example, when I named *owl*, *ostrich*, and *eagle*, my daughter said, "Ostrich, because it can't fly." My son's answer was, "Owl, because it hunts at night."



Now they want to play all the time. I'm glad because we're having fun—and they've gotten better at thinking through their ideas.♥