

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2010



Toluca Lake Elementary School
Parent Center - (818) 980-4980

SHORT NOTES

School volunteers

Working parents can find many opportunities to volunteer at school. Ask your child's teacher how you can help after hours. You might place school T-shirt orders or set up a book fair or math night. If you are bilingual, perhaps you could pass along telephone messages to non-English-speaking families.

Superstar listener

Help your youngster become a better listener—and share some memories at the same time. Ask her to tell you a happy memory from the past year. As she speaks, listen closely, and then respond to what she said. After she's finished, ask her how she knew you were listening. Finally, have her listen while you share a memory.

Language cleanup

Your child may experiment with curse words to get a reaction from you. Staying calm might nip it in the bud. The first time he does it, say something like, "We don't use that word." If it continues, let him know what the consequence will be for bad words, such as lost privileges or a time-out.

Worth quoting

"Hold on to a true friend with both your hands."

Nigerian proverb

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What does a cat become after it's three years old?

A: Four years old.



Learning together

Anthony and Julia work at their kindergarten table, sorting objects by color. Robert, a fifth grader, meets friends after school to study for a test on explorers.

Learning with others is an important part of school in every grade. These ideas can help your child work successfully in a group.

Teach each other. When your youngster studies with a friend, suggest that they both read the material through once. Then, they can split it in half and alternate asking each other questions from "their" sections. Explaining the answers aloud will help them both remember it.

Work cooperatively. Group work is more successful when students share materials, take turns, and solve problems together. For instance, they might flip a coin to decide who will paint which part of a mural for a classroom



wall. Explain to your child that he should try to handle disagreements with classmates before asking the teacher for help.

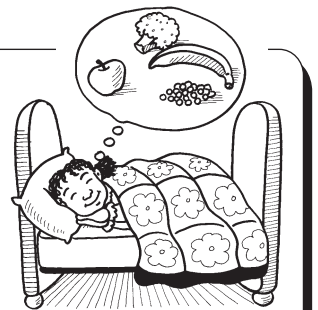
Do your part. Remind your youngster that partners count on each other to contribute. Say he has a group history project. He can prepare for a meeting by writing down ideas (make a timeline, put on a skit). During the work session, he should share his ideas and pay attention to what others have to say. ♥

A healthy new year

When children eat right and get enough sleep, they can stay alert in class and learn more. Help your youngster start the year off right with these healthy habits:

- As part of a balanced diet, your child should have five to nine servings of fruits and vegetables each day. She will be more likely to eat ones that she chooses. Ask, "Which fruit would you like for breakfast?" or "What vegetable should I make for dinner?" *Tip:* Keep a fruit bowl on the table and cut-up vegetables in the refrigerator for snacks.

- Be sure your youngster sleeps 10 to 11 hours per night. You can help her wind down at bedtime with quiet activities like reading or coloring. Remind her to use the bathroom and get a drink of water before she lies down so she'll have no reason to get back up. ♥



Teaching responsibility

How can you raise a responsible child? Teachers work hard to encourage this important character trait in school. Here are some techniques you can try at home.

Create structure

At school, your youngster knows where to put morning work and how to line up when it's time to go to the cafeteria or library. That's because her teacher has a system in place for each responsibility. At home, designate a basket where your child can place forms for you to sign and a spot where she can



keep school supplies and gym shoes. Have a set time for doing homework. Knowing what to do will help her be responsible.

Raise the bar

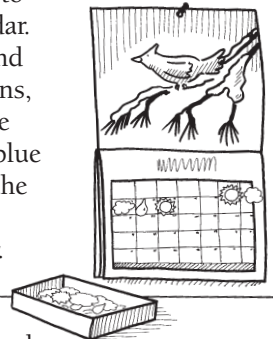
As students show they are dependable, teachers give them more responsibility. For instance, younger students might deliver messages to the office, and older ones may serve as hall patrols. At home, comment on your child's responsible behavior, and add tasks as she is ready. "I'm proud of you for putting out your clothes and getting dressed all by yourself. I think you're ready to start making your bed, too." She'll feel good that you've noticed her success and consider her more "grown up." ♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Weather calendar

Your youngster can keep track of daily weather with this project. It will also help him pay attention to dates on the calendar.

Materials: wall calendar, pencil, colored paper, scissors, box, tape

First, have your youngster make weather symbols to put on the calendar. He might draw and cut out yellow suns, gray clouds, white snowflakes, and blue raindrops. Keep the symbols in a box near the calendar. Each morning, ask him to look out the window and report the weather. Then, he can tape the correct symbol on that day's calendar square.



At the end of the month, have your child tally the weather symbols that he posted. He can report his findings to your family: "We had 3 snowy, 3 rainy, 12 cloudy, and 13 sunny days." ♥

Look closely

Build your child's observation skills and encourage her to notice details with these activities:

- Give everyone paper and a pencil. Set a timer for three minutes, and write down what you see from where you're sitting. (*Hint:* Choose things that others may not notice.) When time's up, read your lists out loud and cross off duplicates. The person with the most items remaining wins.
- Place checkers in random spots on half of a checkerboard. Let your youngster look at the board for 10 seconds. Then, cover that side with a towel. Can she put her checkers in matching spots on the opposite side?
- When your child is in the car, how observant is she? Before you go out, ask her to list 10 businesses she might see (bank, restaurant, car dealership). As she finds each one, she can mark it off her list. ♥



Q & A Holding family meetings

Q: *With our busy schedules, it's hard for our family to find time to talk together and discuss problems. A neighbor suggested that we have family meetings. How should we get started?*

A: Regular meetings can help families communicate and solve problems. There are many ways to set them up. In fact, your first meeting might be to discuss how you will run your meetings!

First, choose a time that works for everyone. Many families meet on Sunday

evenings so they can connect before starting a busy week.

Try to begin your meetings on a good note. You might let each person share a highlight of the week. Next, you can bring up any problems. Maybe your electric bill is too high and you need everyone to turn off lights they aren't using.

Finally, help family members look forward to meetings by making them fun. You might play a game, serve hot chocolate, or tell jokes. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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