

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

May 2010

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

## SHORT NOTES



### I'm a swimmer!

Learning to swim will give your child a fun way to stay fit throughout life. Contact your local parks and recreation department or a community pool about free or low-cost classes. Try to go swimming together between lessons—the more time she spends in water, the more comfortable she will become.

### Pick a pronoun

Help your youngster use pronouns correctly. For example, it can be tough to choose between “I” and “me” (“Kevin and I are playing baseball,” but “Dad played baseball with Kevin and me”). Your child can double-check by leaving the other person’s name out: “I am playing baseball,” or “Dad played with me.”

### Bucket of goodies

Suggest a creative way for your youngster to thank her teacher for a great year. Help her fill a plastic beach pail with treats (a crossword puzzle book, nail polish, tea bags). Then, have her write a thank-you note and use a ribbon to tie it to the handle.

### Worth quoting

“Shoot for the moon. Even if you miss, you’ll land among the stars.”  
*Les Brown*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** When is your birthday?

**A:** July 15.

**Q:** What year?

**A:** Every year!



## At-home adventures

Summertime is learning time! Suggest fun activities while school’s out, and send your child back in the fall ready to learn. Try these ideas.

### Lemonade, anyone?

Your youngster can practice math skills and learn about running a business by opening a lemonade stand. Help him get supplies and figure the cost for a cup (the cost per batch divided by the number of servings). Then, he can set his price. Making the lemonade will teach him about measurement, and he’ll practice addition and subtraction as he charges customers and gives change. *Idea:* To boost sales, have him make blue lemonade (add frozen blueberries to his recipe or mix).

### My reading space

A cozy spot can make reading special for your child—and motivate him to read more. Put pillows, a blanket, and a basket of books in a corner of his room or in a tent in the family room. You might have him add a sign: “Mark’s Reading Corner.” Visit the library weekly so he can restock



his basket. *Tip:* Suggest that he choose a variety, including stories, nonfiction, magazines, and poetry.

### Creative board games

Encourage creative thinking by having your youngster invent new board games. He might start by designing a game that combines two existing games. For example, he could draw a game board that uses Clue characters (Colonel Mustard, Mrs. Peacock) and Candy Land cards (gumdrop, lollipop). Players try to figure out who ate which candy. Have him write out instructions, and then play as a family. *Challenge:* See if he can come up with a new game each week. ♥

## Playing safely

When your youngster plays outside, help her keep safety in mind with these tips:

- She should wear a helmet, knee pads, and elbow pads when skating or using a scooter. She always needs a helmet for bike riding, too. Don’t allow her to wear headphones, since music will drown out traffic noises.
- Remind your child to go down slides feet first and to avoid walking close to moving swings. Also, she shouldn’t wear necklaces or drawstrings on the playground—they can get caught on equipment.
- Fill bottles with ice water before going out, and have your youngster drink frequently. She needs about 5 ounces every 20 minutes when playing in hot weather. ♥

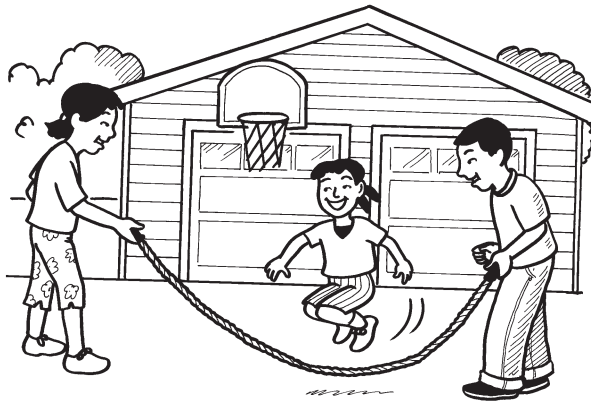


# Sibling harmony

Your children will be spending more time together once school lets out. Here are three ways to help them keep the peace on summer days.

## 1. A daily routine

Knowing what to expect can help your youngsters get along better. Set a schedule for sleeping and eating, and plan for both active and quiet time. For example, your children might play outdoors after breakfast and relax with paper and crayons after lunch.



## 2. Boredom busters

Children who stay occupied have less time for arguments. Help your youngsters brainstorm things to do if they get bored (organize trading cards, build a block city). Post a list on the refrigerator, and remind them to look at it when they're restless.

## 3. Problem-solving skills

Teach your youngsters to compromise when arguments crop up. Sit down together, and ask each child to tell you her side and suggest a solution. Then, help them combine their ideas so they're both satisfied. Once you've done this a few times, try to let them solve problems on their own (unless someone is getting hurt).♥

### ACTIVITY CORNER

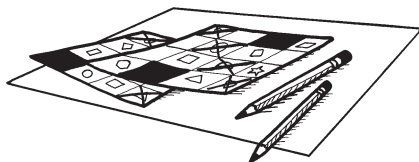


## Waiting-room bingo

Make waiting more fun with this bingo game. You'll build your child's thinking and observation skills.

**Materials:** poster board, pencils, crayons

Before you leave for the doctor's office or a sibling's karate class, have your youngster create a bingo card for each person. Help him cut a small poster board into gameboard-size squares. On each one, he can draw a grid with four rows and four columns. Then, have him color in some of the boxes (blue, green, red) and draw shapes in the others (square, oval, rectangle).



To play, look for items in the waiting room that match the colors and shapes on your board. *Examples:* a blue raincoat, a rectangular window. Cross out each box as you spot an object that matches. The first one to get four in a row wins. If you have more time, try to find every item on your board.♥

### Q & A

## Family volunteering

**Q:** I'd like to teach my son to help others. How can our family volunteer together?

**A:** Most communities have plenty of volunteer opportunities for families. Choose a cause that your child is interested in or that he can understand. He will learn a valuable lesson about helping others.

For example, if he loves animals, your family might help the Humane Society at a pet adoption event. A nature lover may enjoy planting flowers at an arboretum or a school. If your family has an ill relative or friend, you might sign up for a fund-raising walk (visit [www.thewalkingsite.com/events.html](http://www.thewalkingsite.com/events.html) to look for events).

As you volunteer, talk to your youngster about what you are doing and how it makes a difference. For example, you might say, "We are showing our support for people with cancer and raising money so researchers can find a cure."♥



### PARENT TO PARENT

## My child, the teacher

I was playing school with my kindergartner recently while my fourth-grader, Ava, was studying for a math test. She kept mixing up the steps for long division, and she was getting frustrated. I remembered how she loved playing school when she was little, so I asked her to be the teacher and show me how to divide.

Ava put a problem on her little sister's chalkboard. She went through each step slowly, and I

followed along—while her little sister pretended to. Explaining the process in her own words really seemed to clear it up for Ava.

She did well on her math test, so I suggested that we play school for other tests, too. So far, Ava has "taught" me the major exports of our state, how plants create food, and how to make subjects and verbs agree in a sentence. She loves playing teacher, and her little sister and I are learning a lot!♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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