

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

October 2010

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

SHORT NOTES



Celebrate autumn

Many communities welcome fall with special festivals. Your child can practice research and planning skills by picking one for your family to visit. Together, check the newspaper or online, and suggest that she consider price, schedule, location, and activities (hayrides, live music, apple picking).

Better concentration

Looking for a fun way to improve your youngster's concentration? Try this quick game. The first player makes one motion, like clapping or spinning around. The second person copies him and adds another movement. Continue adding new motions until someone forgets the sequence. The last player to get it right starts a new game.

School events

This year, attend an evening event, such as a literacy workshop, math fair, or science night, at your child's school. When you go, carry a notebook to write down things you and your youngster can do at home. You might jot down books to read, games to play, or experiments to do, for instance.

Worth quoting

"Make each day your masterpiece."
John Wooden

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: Mollie, go to the map and find North America.

Mollie: Here it is.

Teacher: Correct. Now class, who discovered America?

Class: Mollie.



Super study skills

A child who knows when, what, and how to study is more likely to be ready for a quiz or test—and will learn more. Help your youngster get prepared with these tips.

When

Your child will learn the most toward the beginning of study time, when her mind is fresh. Have her plan several short study sessions as soon as her teacher announces a test. Working at a comfortable pace will help her remember more and stay motivated. *Tip:* Suggest that older children split study sessions in half, taking a break to eat a snack or ride a bike.

What

Students can make the most of study time by knowing what will be on a test. If your youngster isn't sure what will be covered, she should ask her teacher. Before she studies, you might give her a "pre-test" so she can see what she needs to focus on. For example, if she correctly defines 6 of her 20 vocabulary words, she can spend her time on the other 14.



How

Explain to your child that studying is more than just reading—she should "actively" study. That way, she'll really learn the material rather than simply memorizing it for a test. As she goes over class notes or handouts, she can highlight important points. While reviewing her textbook, she might draw pictures or diagrams. Or she could record herself asking questions and then play them back, pausing the recorder to give the answers. Finally, quiz her on the material after she has studied. ♥

My office

A place to do homework is an important part of a regular study routine. Use these steps to help your youngster create his own "home office."

1. Ask your child where he would like to work. It can be a permanent spot such as a desk or table in his bedroom. Or he can put together a portable homework tote bag for carrying supplies to the kitchen table.
2. Help him stock his homework area. He should include pencils, a pencil sharpener, erasers, paper, a ruler, a calculator, and a dictionary. *Tip:* Remind him to let you know when supplies are running low.
3. Suggest that your youngster make a "Student at Work" sign to hang on his bedroom doorknob or kitchen chair. It will show him that his work is important, and it can alert siblings not to disturb him. ♥



Good manners

With regular practice, polite words and actions will come naturally to your child. Here are ways to help him use good manners in any situation:

- Point out examples. Your youngster can learn by watching what others do (“It was polite of that man to hold the door for us”). If you get a thank-you note in the mail, read it to your child so he can see what thank-you notes are for and how they’re written.



- Be consistent. A youngster who uses good table manners at home, for instance, is more likely to use them in restaurants and in other people’s homes. If you expect your child to ask before being excused or to try foods he’s offered when he is a dinner guest, have him use those manners at your table.

ACTIVITY CORNER

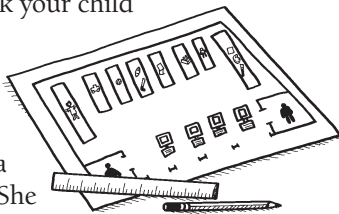


Make a map

Shopping centers, parks, bus stations...everywhere your child goes, she’s likely to find a map. Help her learn to understand and use maps by showing her a few and suggesting that she make her own.

Locate a map of your town, and explain to your youngster that a map gives a “bird’s-eye view.” That’s the view she’d have if she could fly above and look down. Maps also use symbols—point out the elevator icon on a mall map or the picnic-shelter symbol on a park map.

Then, ask your child to choose a place (toy shop, bookstore) and create a map for it. She can use a ruler to draw aisles and pick symbols to add. A computer could represent the check-out counter, or dice might stand for the game department.



The next time you visit a place like the one she drew, have her take her map along and compare it with the real thing!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Fun with OT

My older daughter Jessie recently started occupational therapy—OT—at school to improve her fine-motor coordination. And I was surprised to discover that it’s helping her little sister Amanda, too.

Although Amanda doesn’t have a learning disability like Jessie does, the exercises that the therapist sends home are improving both girls’ handwriting. They love doing the activities together—their favorite is tearing colored paper into tiny pieces to make mosaic pictures. And Amanda’s enthusiasm is helping Jessie feel good about going to OT. The other day when we used the therapist’s recipe to make glitter clay, the girls had fun playing with it together.

Now we have weekly “OT sessions” at home, and Jessie is doing great. I think she is discovering that anyone—not just kids with learning disabilities—can benefit from extra help.♥



Q & A Talking about worries

Q: I think something is bothering my son. How can I get him to talk to me?

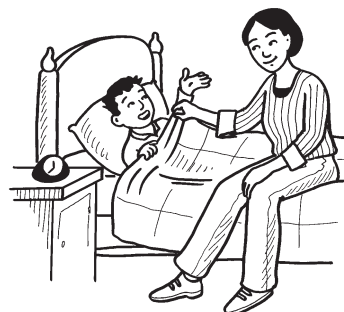
A: Putting worries into words can help your youngster deal with them. And once you know what’s bothering him, you can step in if necessary.

First, find a good time to talk, such as when you’re in the car or tucking him into bed. You might start by sharing something that’s bothering you (“I don’t know how I’ll get everything done at work tomorrow”). Then ask casually, “So, what’s on

your mind?” If he doesn’t open up, try more specific questions. (“How’s soccer going?” or “What are your friends up to?”)

If he mentions a worry (“I’m not good at soccer”), react calmly and listen as he talks. Ask questions that will encourage him to say more. *Example:* “Hmm, why do you feel that way?” Be sure

to take his concern seriously. You might make suggestions, like taking him to the park to practice. Finally, follow up on your conversation until you feel his worries have been resolved.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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