

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

Working Together for School Success

May 2013



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

## SHORT NOTES

### Reading together

Summer reading isn't just for students. Suggest that everyone in your family write down books they'd like to read this summer. Post their lists alongside your youngster's assigned reading list. Then, hold family reading time each evening. Check off the books as you finish them—and add more!

### Notice customs

When your child visits friends or relatives, remind him to show respect for their rules and traditions. For example, some families don't wear shoes indoors, and some greet visitors with bows or handshakes. Encourage him to take cues from his hosts about what's appropriate.

### Cool summer breakfasts

Help your youngster enjoy healthy foods with these no-cook breakfast ideas. Chop an avocado for her to mash onto whole-wheat toast. Have her spread cream cheese and sliced fruit on a mini bagel. Or let her stir rolled oats, nuts, and honey into fat-free Greek yogurt. She can write down her favorites to remember for busy school mornings.

### Worth quoting

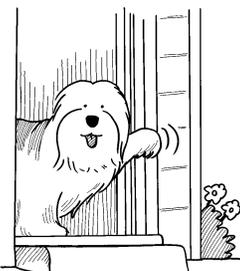
"No entertainment is so cheap as reading, nor any pleasure so lasting."

Mary Wortley Montagu

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** When is a sheepdog most likely to go into a house?

**A:** When the door is open.



## Outdoor learning

Whether your child takes a walk, visits a park, or plays in the backyard, the outdoors is full of learning opportunities. Try these ideas to keep his science, social studies, and word skills sharp this summer.

### My habitat

When your youngster goes outside, suggest that he carry a small notebook and a pencil to draw animals and insects. He should look closely—in ponds, under rocks, and in trees. Then, he can sketch the creature and make notes about its behavior ("The ducklings swam behind their mother in a line"). He'll make observations and record data, just like in science class.

### 3-D map

This three-dimensional map will let your child practice geography skills. First, have him choose an outdoor area (park, yard) and collect natural objects to represent its features (mulch = playground,



grass = fields). Then, let him cover a cookie sheet with soil and add the items in the correct locations. Finally, he should draw a key telling what the items stand for.

### Sidewalk words

Your youngster can use sidewalk chalk to play with vocabulary and spelling. Help him draw a giant grid with 16 squares and write a letter in each (being sure to include vowels). Take turns looking for a word—letters must be connected vertically, horizontally, or diagonally. When you spot one, hop on it from the first letter to the last. Who can find the longest word? ♥

## Look ahead to next year

School may just be ending, but it will start up again before you know it! Mark these suggestions on your calendar for easing your youngster back into the routine.

### The month before...

- Whenever you shop, tell your child to help you look for school supplies on sale. You'll save money—and avoid a big, last-minute shopping trip.

- Ask your youngster to model last fall's clothes to see what still fits. Together, list clothes and shoes she needs.

### The week before...

- Get up early, and practice walking to school or the bus stop. *Idea:* Visit the school playground to help her feel excited about going back.

- Let her get together with a classmate or two. She'll be more comfortable starting school if she's already in touch with other students. ♥



# A confident child

Does your youngster believe in herself and her abilities? Help her develop healthy self-esteem with the following tips.

**Give realistic praise.** Try to be specific—and reasonable—when you praise her. If she is taking piano lessons, you could say, “Good job sticking with your practice schedule,” or “Wow, you’re learning to read music,” rather than, “You’re so musical!” This will help her feel good about the work she is putting in and encourage her to keep it up.

**Trust your child.** Show her that you have faith in her. When you ask her to do



something (say, make a salad), resist hovering over her or correcting her. Instead, let her make it her way, even if it’s not quite the way you would do it. You might point out something you like (“Your salad is very colorful”).

**Use mistakes as opportunities.**

Bouncing back from mistakes is an important key to self-esteem. If your youngster accidentally rips her paper while drawing or painting, brainstorm ways to save it. She could glue her picture onto another piece of

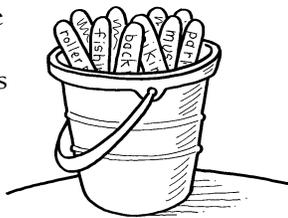
paper or cut it apart into different shapes and put them together to make a collage. ♥



## Inexpensive family activities

**Q:** We can’t afford summer camp or a big vacation. But we want our boys to have new experiences. Any ideas?

**A:** Your sons can learn and explore new things anywhere! Find ideas by browsing your county’s parks and recreation catalogs, reading local parenting blogs, and looking in the newspaper. You might visit historic sites in neighboring towns, go hiking or fishing, or attend library programs.



Another suggestion is to make a summer activity bucket. Ask family members to think of new things they’d like to try this summer. *Examples:* Set up a backyard “water park,” learn a new outdoor game. Then, write each activity on a wooden craft stick, and put the sticks in a sand bucket. On Sunday evenings, let each family member pull out a stick, and plan to do the activity during the week. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Thank-you treats

Your child can thank his teacher for a great year—and practice math and writing—with these tasty treats-in-a-jar.



**Cookies**

Let your youngster measure the dry ingredients from a cookie recipe and layer them in a jar. Then, ask him to write the recipe on one side of a card and a thank-you note on the other. *Example:* “Thank you for teaching me to multiply and divide. Have a great summer!” Help him hole-punch the card and tie it to the jar with a ribbon.

**S’mores**

For this jar, your child can layer graham cracker squares, small chocolate bars, and marshmallows. On a large mailing label, let him write a note like “Here is a treat to enjoy over a campfire. Thanks for teaching me s’more about reading and writing this year!” He can decorate the label and stick it on the jar. ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

### Play a storytelling game

My daughter came home from school excited about a storyteller who performed at an assembly. Sarah wanted to try storytelling at home, but she wasn’t sure how.

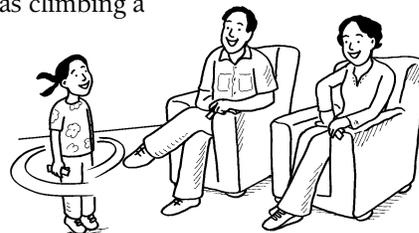
I asked her to tell me about the assembly. She said the storyteller pretended to be different characters, used motions to show he was climbing a tree, and made sound effects like snoring.

So I suggested that Sarah write ideas for different characters, motions, and sound effects on separate

slips of paper. We put them in three piles, and she drew one of each to use in telling a story. Her character was a dolphin, the motion was twirling in circles, and the sound effect was laughing. Sarah had fun making up a story about a dolphin that could do amazing tricks—and we laughed along with the “dolphin.” Then

it was my turn. We’re all still giggling over the crazy story I came up with!

We had such a good time that now we’re looking forward to regular family storytelling nights. ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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