Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

February 2011

St. Anne Catholic School
Catholic School Parent Council

SHORT NOTES

Message in a bottle

The next time your child wants to give a friend a birthday or holiday card, suggest this creative alternative. Have him write a message on a sheet of paper, roll it up, and slide it inside a clean plastic bottle. He can decorate the outside with permanent markers and stickers.

What if?

Encourage your youngster to think like a scientist by posing questions about cause and effect. For example, ask, "What will happen if you leave a piece of banana out?" or "What will happen if you cover the radio speaker with your hand?" Then, try it and see what happens.

Smoke-free for me

It will be easier for your child to resist peer pressure later if you talk regularly now about the dangers of cigarettes. For example, if you see someone smoking, quietly mention that cigarettes are addictive and cause heart and lung disease. Or point out "No Smoking" signs and explain that they protect people from secondhand smoke.

Worth quoting

"Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm."
Abraham Lincoln

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why shouldn't you tell a joke while you're ice-skating?

A: Because the ice might crack up!

Choosing to behave

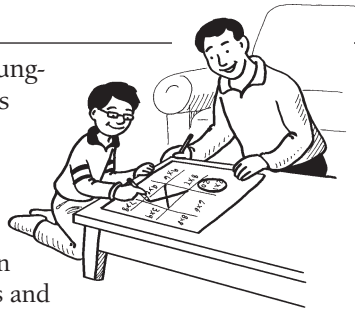
Planning ahead, giving choices, offering alternatives—all are gentle ways to help your youngster behave well. Try these suggestions for raising a child who listens and follows rules.

Give notice. Children can take longer than adults to switch gears. If you ask your youngster to get ready to go while she's in the middle of a game, she may struggle. When possible, let her know in advance what's going to happen ("You can play for five more minutes, and then it's time to go"). *Idea:* Develop a special signal (tap your finger on your wrist, tug on your ear) to use when you're short on time.

Provide choices. Letting your child make her own decisions can motivate her to follow the rules. Plus, making choices will give her a sense of control over herself as well as practice in decision making. For example, you can say, "You have to stay with me in the mall. Would you like to walk beside the stroller or help me push it?"

Suggest solutions. When your youngster is bored or wants attention, she's more likely to misbehave. If she needs to burn off energy after school, for example, help her brainstorm a list of ways to stay active (play outside, dance to music). Or if she tends to argue with siblings while you cook, have her help you make dinner or just keep you company in the kitchen.♥

It's a fact!



Learning math facts is more fun when your youngster makes a game out of it. Here are two activities he'll want to do again and again:

- Using an old jigsaw puzzle, ask your child to fit three pieces together, turn them over, and write an addition problem on the back (*example:* "9 +" on one piece, "9" on the next, and "= 18" on the third). Have him continue fitting together pieces and writing more problems. Then, he can mix all the pieces up and put the problems back together.
- Together, draw tic-tac-toe grids and write a multiplication problem (8 x 7, 3 x 9) in each square. To play, choose a box, solve the problem correctly, and write an X or O on top. The first player to get three Xs or Os in a row wins.♥

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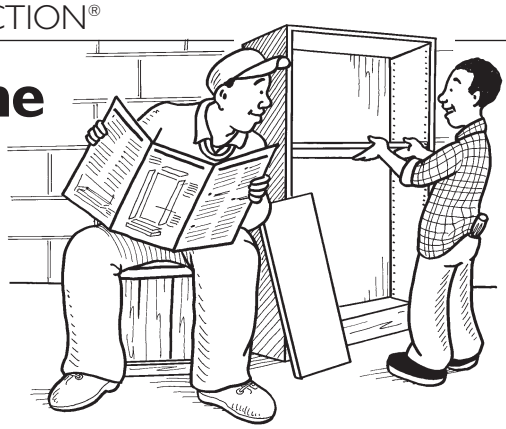
Many ways to shine



Is your child an expert when it comes to building model airplanes? Or does he have a knack for gardening or acting? Children have many talents—here's how you can help your youngster use his to learn more.

Fix-it kids

Perhaps your child is good at building and repairing things. Ask him to help you assemble shelves or repair a broken picture frame. He'll develop logical-thinking and problem-solving skills as he pitches in at home. You can also encourage him to find woodworking projects in library books or visit *www.howstuffworks.com* to learn how things work.

Nature lovers

If your youngster likes the outdoors, have him research nature trails and lead your family on a hike. Or he might plan and plant a vegetable or flower garden in the spring. Let him check out field guides and outdoor magazines from the library. Understanding how living things grow and what they need can help him do well in science.

Creative minds

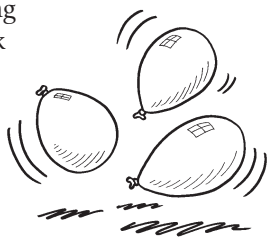
A child who enjoys music, art, dance, or theater can explore opportunities to express his creativity. Encourage him to join the school chorus or enter art shows. He might also try out for school or community plays—he'll practice reading and speaking skills as he memorizes his lines. Or he could use his talents to develop a new hobby like songwriting, which will build writing skills that will help him in school.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Teaching teamwork

What does "TEAM" stand for? "Together, everyone achieves more!" Teach your child this saying, and then show her the value of teamwork with these games.

Floating balloons. Blow up some balloons. Give one to each person, stand in a circle, and try to keep all the balloons in the air. When everyone gets the hang of it, add another balloon. Continue adding more, and work together to keep them all afloat. Your youngster will see the value of teamwork!



Shrinking sheet. Spread a sheet on the living room floor, and have everyone stand on top. Without letting anyone step off, fold the sheet in half. Keep folding it in half repeatedly, using teamwork to see how small you can make it while helping each other stay on.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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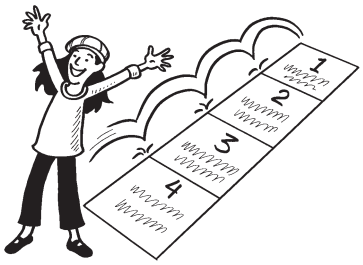
PARENT TO PARENT

Steps to project success



When our daughter Lucy had a school assignment to design a poster about a character trait, she wasn't sure where to begin. My husband explained to her that he starts his work projects by listing the steps involved.

Lucy thought that was a good plan, so she wrote: *1. Pick a trait. 2. Do research. 3. Get supplies. 4. Make a poster.* I suggested that she add a due date for each part to keep herself on track. Focusing on one step at a time helped Lucy relax and come up with ideas.

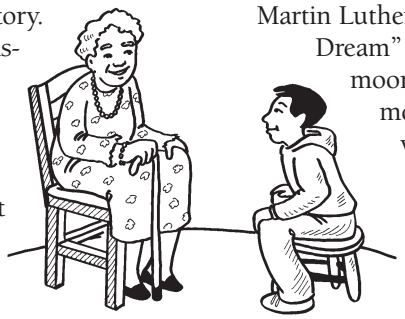
First, she browsed library books and chose friendship as her topic. For research, she interviewed friends about what friendship meant to them and took their pictures. Then, she gathered materials, including poster board, glue, and markers. Finally, she put each photo on her poster and wrote what the person said underneath.

Lucy actually finished her poster early, and she was happy with her grade. Best of all, the project went smoothly, and she learned a new way to handle assignments.♥

It's all history!

Your youngster might think of history as only something that happened a long time ago. Help bring it to life for him with these ideas:

● Show your child that people are still making history. Write, "This week in history…" on a strip of paper, and put it on a bulletin board or the refrigerator. Encourage family members to post newspaper and magazine articles about events they think will still be important many years from now (scientific discoveries, new laws).



● Have your youngster talk to older family members or friends about history they've lived through. If he has studied Martin Luther King Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech or America's first moon landing, he can learn more details—and imagine what it was like to be there—by hearing from people who remember seeing or reading about the events when they happened.♥