Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

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Prairie View Elementary, Holmen WI

Brett Eiken, School Counselor

SHORT NOTES

Active listening

Listening challenge! Ask your youngster to listen while you describe a recent meal in detail: "For breakfast, I had a fried egg, toast with peach jam, a Gala apple, and black coffee." Then ask questions like "How was my egg cooked?" and "What kind of apple did I eat?" Now he can give you a listening challenge.

Keep germs away

When your child touches her face, she can transfer germs from her hands to her eyes, nose, and mouth. Help her touch it less often by keeping her hair trimmed and out of her eyes and having tissues available. If she wears face masks or glasses, make sure they fit properly so she's not constantly adjusting them.

Practice being polite

Role-play to help your child remember his manners. Take turns naming situations where politeness is called for (introducing people, receiving a gift). The other person acts out how to handle it politely. Your youngster might pat his dog on the head, look you in the eye, and say: "Dad, I'd like you to meet Domino."

Worth quoting

"It's easier to go down a hill than up it, but the view is much better at the top." *Henry Ward Beecher*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why does the Statue of Liberty stand in New York Harbor?

A: Because it can't sit down.

Wordplay boosts vocabulary

A rich vocabulary gives your child the words she needs to express her thoughts and understand her schoolwork. Try these playful activities to help her learn new words.

Clever combinations

A *portmanteau* is a new word formed by blending two existing words (*jeans* + *leggings* = *jeggings*, *breakfast* + *lunch* = *brunch*). You and your youngster can make up portmanteaus for each other to guess. She might say, "What do you call a rainbow on a snowy day?" (A *snowbow*!) And you could ask, "What do you call a documentary that's comical?" (A *doccom*.)

Words within words

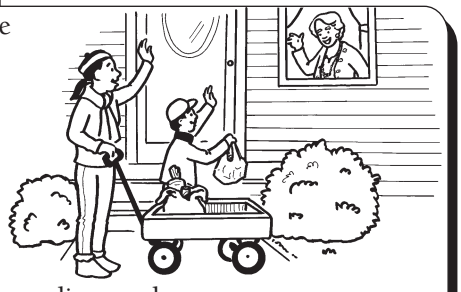
Pick a word (say, *monitor*) for each family member to write on her paper. Set a timer for 5 minutes, and list words you can make using letters in the word. A fun twist: You may use any letter multiple times within the same word, so *mirror* is allowed even though *monitor* has only one R. When time's up, read your lists aloud. Did anyone learn a new word from someone else's list?

Synonym suns

Have your child draw a big sun on a sheet of paper and write a common word (say, *good*) in the center. Take turns adding a ray to the sun and writing a synonym (*excellent*, *great*). On your turns, try to choose words your youngster may not know, such as *stupendous*. When you can't think of more synonyms, start another sun with a new word.♥

Brighten someone's day

Sometimes the smallest gesture can make another person happy, especially in a difficult situation like the pandemic. Here are ways your youngster can add a little sunshine to others' lives:



- Let your child mail thank-you notes to your family's doctors and their staffs. He could also leave thank-yous for delivery-truck drivers, mail carriers, and trash and recycling workers.
- Suggest that your youngster host an online talent show. Relatives might sing or play musical instruments, dance, or do magic or card tricks for each other.
- Run errands for elderly neighbors. Your child could call to get their grocery list, then help you order the items or shop and deliver them.♥

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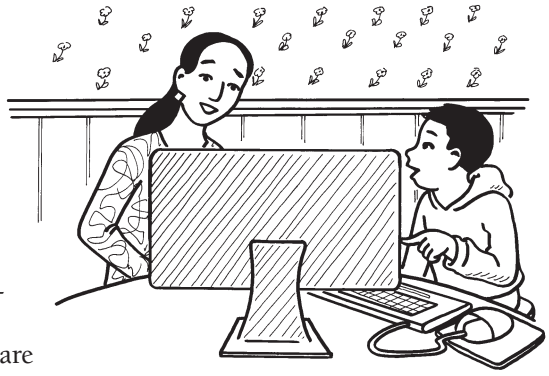
How to handle cyberbullying

Many kids are spending more time using technology to do schoolwork and to socialize this year. That means more potential for cyberbullying. Share these strategies to help your youngster avoid it.



Be informed. Explain to your child that cyberbullying includes texting, chatting, or posting unkind or threatening messages. It's also cyberbullying to spread rumors, intimidate people, or share private information that would embarrass someone.

React appropriately. Does your youngster know what to do if he's cyberbullied? Talk frankly about tactics that help (telling an adult) and *don't* help (responding to the person doing the bullying). Together, learn how to take screenshots of texts or chats in case he needs proof of a cyberbullying incident.

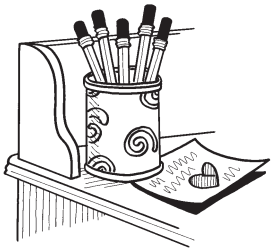
Provide guidance. Set clear guidelines for your child's online behavior. For example, he shouldn't send a message or photo to another child that he wouldn't want you or his teacher to see. It may be a good idea to point out that other kids and their parents can take screenshots, too.♥

Signs of affection

Even when life gets hectic, remember to show your child on a daily basis that you love her. Simple words and actions like these will go a long way in making her feel loved and secure.

Leave notes

Secretly leave a loving message in your youngster's "home office" or backpack. ("Have a great school day! Love, Dad.")



Eat together

Plan special school-day breakfasts with your child. You'll connect before a busy day. Also, consider joining her for lunch on days when you're both home.

Share photos

Look at old family photos with your youngster, or show her "on this day" pictures on social media or photo-sharing sites. Say what you loved about her then ("You were so little and cuddly") and what you love about her now ("I still love hugs from you—plus I love our interesting conversations").♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ACTIVITY CORNER Geography: Maps and more

Your youngster's day is filled with opportunities to explore geography. Here are three ideas.

1. Food. Ask your child to read stickers on fruits and vegetables you buy to find out where the food was grown. Together, look up the weather in those states or countries. She'll see what produce is grown in warmer or cooler temperatures.

2. Mail. Let your youngster check postmarks, find the locations on a map, and calculate how many miles the mail traveled to reach you.

3. Time zones. Plan a phone call with a relative who lives in a different time zone, and help your child look up the time there. Then, she could see what time it is in other places around the world.♥

Q & A Doing well on tests

Q: *My son struggled on his last two tests. How can I help him do better on future ones?*

A: Test success begins with knowing the material. Have your child get in the habit of studying a little each evening rather than cramming the night before a test. Offer to help by quizzing him, or suggest that he make up—and take—his own quizzes.

On the morning of a test, remind your son to read the test directions first and ask his teacher about anything he doesn't understand. You might recommend that he look over all the questions and start by tackling easier ones. That will give him some momentum and boost his confidence.

Finally, encourage your child to be the "boss" of his thoughts. If he thinks, "I can't do this," he can take a few deep breaths and instead think, "I studied hard and I will do my best."♥