

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

April 2017

Blairstown Elementary School
Mr. Bruce P. Leal, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Keep up attendance



Good attendance matters all year. Show your youngster that going to school every day is job number one. If you plan to visit relatives or take a vacation this summer, check the school calendar to make sure your trip won't overlap with the end of this school year or the beginning of the next one.

Siblings as roommates

Have more than one child? Consider letting them share a room—even if they don't need to. Sharing space can help siblings bond and teach them about cooperation and respect. Plus, youngsters may be comforted and find it easier to fall asleep with someone else in the room.

Build observation skills

Boost your child's powers of observation during your next walk. Together, gaze at a scene (say, a playground) closely for 1 minute to observe as many details as possible. Then, turn around and take turns asking each other specific questions, like "How many swings are there?" or "What color is the slide?"

Worth quoting

"It does not matter how slowly you go so long as you do not stop." *Confucius*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What do clouds wear in their hair?

A: Rainbows.



Bring learning home

Help your child feel proud of the skills she's learning by giving her opportunities to use them outside of school. You'll boost her confidence—and she'll see that reading, math, and science are useful in everyday life. Pose questions like these for her to answer.

How can we organize our cabinets?

Your youngster may enjoy giving your kitchen cabinets a makeover. Suggest that she draw a "blueprint" for organizing dishes, pots and pans, canned goods, and other items. Review it together, and try some of her ideas—perhaps arranging spices in alphabetical order or stacking plates by size.

What will we do this weekend?

Let your child plan a fun outing for your family. She could start by checking the weather forecast. Then, encourage her to read newspaper listings and community websites to find activities, such as an arts and crafts fair, a free concert, or a minor-league baseball game. She'll need



to read for details like times, locations, and prices before she presents her idea.

Where should we keep the bread?

Ask your youngster to conduct a science experiment to discover how to keep your bread fresh and mold-free the longest. She could use what she's learning in science class to set identical slices of wrapped bread on the counter, in the pantry, and in the refrigerator. What does she find? She'll be excited when you use her results to decide where to store bread. ♥

Develop good money sense

Now is the time to help your youngster manage money wisely—before he gets his first job or has bills to pay. Try these kid-friendly ideas:

- Have regular conversations about money. You might say, "Chicken is on sale this week—we'll save money if we buy extra to freeze," or "I want new curtains, but our car will need tires soon, and I need to save for them."
- Suggest that your child give a stuffed animal a pretend allowance and write a budget for how to manage it. Explain that it should include savings and put *needs* before *wants* (so his stuffed monkey might buy bananas to eat or a tree to live in before purchasing one more ball to play with). *Tip:* If possible, give your youngster a small weekly allowance to work on real-life budgeting. ♥



Practicing patience

In today's world, youngsters often have instant access to information, songs, and movies. As a result, they might not learn patience. Encourage your child to get better at waiting patiently with these tips.

Set an example. Let your youngster see you waiting calmly during challenging situations. In a traffic jam, you could say, "It looks like we'll be sitting here for a while. Would you read your story to me?"

Discover strategies. What does "wait a minute" or "wait 5 minutes" look like? Look at your watch, and have each



family member raise his hand when he thinks 1 minute has gone by. They should raise their hands again when they think it's been 5 minutes. Repeat the activity, but this time, ask each person to do something he enjoys like reading or drawing. Does the time seem to go

faster? Your child will learn that staying occupied will help him be patient.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Write a winning argument

My daughter Lucy has been asking for a cat for months. So when she told me that she was learning to write "arguments" in school, I asked her to write me a letter arguing why we should get a cat.

A few days later, Lucy handed me her letter. She had stated her claim — "Having a pet helps kids become responsible." She even gathered evidence. She talked to three friends and wrote about how they care for their animals.



Finally, she considered my side, saying she knew I was worried I'd end up doing all the work. So she proposed a rule: She would have to feed the cat and scoop out its litter box before going out to play.

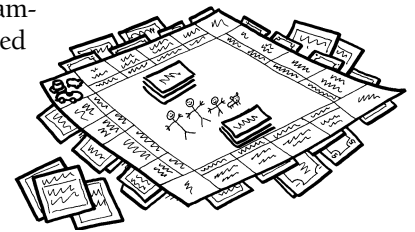
Lucy's letter worked, and we're going to the animal shelter this weekend to adopt her cat. Now she sees that writing a good argument can pay off!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Make a personalized game

What's more fun than family game night? Playing a game your child designed herself! Consider these suggestions.

1. Family-opoly. Have your youngster create a personalized Monopoly game. She might name properties after people, places, or things that are important to your family (say, her grandparents' native country or her brother's college mascot). After she makes the board and property cards, use Monopoly money and game pieces to play her version.



2. Trivia, Family Edition. Encourage family members to write questions about your family on index cards, with the answers on the backs. *Examples:* "What breakfast dish is Dad famous for?" or "How did we celebrate Mom's 40th birthday?" Stack the cards with the answers facing down. Your child draws one and reads the question aloud. The first person to answer correctly keeps the card and asks the next question. When all cards have been used, the player with the most wins.♥

Q & A Believe it—or not?

Q: My child believes everything in TV commercials. How can I help him understand what's accurate and what's exaggerated?

A: Try this eye-opening activity. Let your son take photos around your home. Half should make your house look good, and the other half not so good. For example, he could snap a shot of a freshly vacuumed room with the bed made and one of an overflowing trash can and a dirty wall.



Now, look through the pictures. Have him imagine he is "selling" your house by showing only the flattering pictures. Is he giving the full story?

Explain that this is how commercials work, too — advertisers want to show their products in the best light. Together, watch commercials, and talk about the "other" side that you're not seeing.

You could also read product reviews to get a more complete picture. Your son will learn to think critically about information he sees and hears.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
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www.rfeonline.com
ISSN 1540-5621