

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

Working Together for School Success

May 2017



Blairstown Elementary School  
Mr. Bruce P. Leal, Principal

## SHORT NOTES

### Thank you, teacher

Encourage your youngster to decide how she wants to thank her teacher for a great year. Maybe she'll make a card that tells what she liked best. ("The engineering projects were cool. I really had fun building a bridge.") She can hand-deliver the card along with a homemade gift, perhaps a bird feeder or a pencil jar.

### Middle school ahead

Do you have a child moving on to middle school? He will feel more confident if he knows what to expect. Make sure he attends orientation, where he'll meet staff and begin to learn his way around. He might also ask older kids for advice about getting from one class to another on time or finding a seat in the cafeteria.

### Happy parent, happy child

A happy parent equals a happier household. To increase your family's overall happiness, try to find time every day to do something that pleases you. *Examples:* enjoy a hobby, spend time with a friend, read a book.

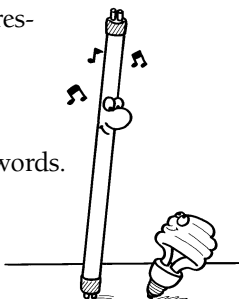
### Worth quoting

"Good actions give strength to ourselves and inspire good actions in others." *Plato*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Why do fluorescent light bulbs always hum?

**A:** Because they don't know the words.



## Explore the outdoors

From sunny mornings when dew sparkles on the grass to dark nights when stars appear in the sky, the great outdoors is the perfect summer "classroom" for your child. Enjoy these activities together to help him appreciate nature and learn more about it.

### Observe nature

Have your youngster put together an outdoor exploration kit. He could fill a shoebox or a reusable grocery bag with a magnifying glass for examining bugs, binoculars for gazing at constellations, and a sketch pad and colored pencils for drawing and labeling what he sees. Let him use his kit all summer long in your backyard, at the park, or on hikes.

### Count collections

Encourage your child to gather leaves, nuts, seeds, and other objects from the ground. He'll practice math skills as he counts, sorts, and graphs his "finds." He might make a pictograph to compare the number of seeds, nuts, and leaves he collected. *Idea:* Suggest that he research his



discoveries in nature guides and display his collection with facts on index cards. ("A sweetgum ball is the fruit of a sweetgum tree.")

### Take poetry walks

Go on poetry walks. Your youngster can jot down notes on what he sees, hears, feels, and smells. Perhaps he'll walk barefoot across damp grass, sniff a patch of honeysuckle, or run his hand over the bark of a tree. Then, he could use his notes to write a poem, such as:

*Dew is cool under my bare feet  
The honeysuckle smells so sweet.♥*

## Celebrate learning

Let your child know how proud you are of her efforts this school year by holding a learning celebration. Here are suggestions:

- Be your youngster's audience as she reads aloud stories or reports she wrote. Asking questions will show you're interested.
- Help your child make a hallway gallery of her artwork. Hang up favorite pieces, and invite family members to take a tour.
- Show her all the progress she has made! Pull out samples of her homework or projects from early in the year. She will enjoy seeing how much she has learned and improved.♥



# Expressing empathy

How can you help your youngster develop empathy? Encourage her to be aware of how others feel and to take action with these ideas.

**1. Recognize.** This activity lets your child see the world from various points of view. First, have her cut out magazine photos of a dozen faces. Take turns choosing one and making up a story about how the person feels. Say your youngster picks a frowning child gazing out



the window on a rainy day. She could say, “He feels disappointed that he can’t go out and play.” Continue until you’ve used up all the pictures.

**2. Act.** Now explain that it’s time to put this knowledge into action. Ask your youngster to imagine how people feel in real life and then express empathy for them. As she goes about her day, she should keep an eye out

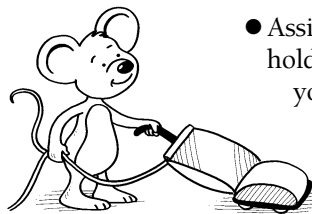
for people’s feelings. Perhaps she will spot a girl on the playground who looks anxious for a turn on the swings and offer to let her go first.♥



# Routines that work

Sticking to routines in the summer makes it easier for your child to adjust to school routines in the fall. Try these tips:

- Have your youngster get up and go to bed at around the same time each day. That way, early school mornings won’t be such a big change.



- Assign household chores so your child stays in the habit of having regular

responsibilities, just like he does in the classroom. He could vacuum, sweep, or dust, for example.

- Eat regular meals together when possible. You might enjoy an early breakfast before work and reconnect with a family dinner in the evening.

- Play outdoors every day. Your youngster will stay active and burn off energy—and work toward the 60 minutes of daily recommended physical activity.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### My book trailer

“You’re going to love this book! Here’s why.”

Let your child introduce friends or family to books he reads by creating his own “book trailers”—videos that give sneak peeks into books the way movie trailers do for movies.

He’ll need to think about a book’s details, how the plot unfolds, who the main characters are, and what facts are presented. Remind him to give clues about the book’s contents—but not give away the ending or any plot twists. He could practice speaking while holding up the book to show pictures.

When he’s ready, record him with a camera or cell phone. He can watch the video and re-record until he’s pleased. Then, have him share his trailer with others. Anytime he reads a book he thinks friends would like, suggest that he make a new trailer.♥



## Q & A

### Prevent summer math slide

**Q:** I’m concerned that my daughter’s math skills will get rusty while school is out. What should I do?

**A:** Keeping math “muscles” strong is fun!

Look for ways to add math to outdoor games. For instance, write math facts like  $7 + 8$  or  $9 \times 6$  in hopscotch squares. As your daughter jumps to each box, she calls out the answer. If she’s “It” during hide-and-seek, she could count to 100 by 2s, 5s, or 10s while players hide.

Also, give her opportunities to estimate. Cut open a watermelon, and ask how many seeds she thinks it contains. Or have her estimate how many people are in the deep end of the swimming pool or in your row at a baseball game. Then, she should count to check her answers. As she estimates and counts, her skills will improve.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,  
a division of CCH Incorporated  
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630  
800-394-5052 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com  
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