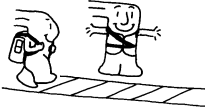


Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

September 2017

Blairstown Elementary School
Mr. Bruce P. Leal, Principal



SHORT NOTES

Sign your work

Encourage your youngster to get in the habit of writing his name on his paper before he begins an assignment. He could think of it as “autographing” his work, just like artists sign their masterpieces. His teacher will know who the paper belongs to, and he’ll get credit for his hard work.

Safety smarts

Help your child travel safely to and from school. Explain that it’s important to avoid horseplay at the bus stop and to stay away from the street. If your youngster walks to school, make sure she sticks with a group. And if you drive, drop her at the designated spot, and remember to stop for school buses loading or unloading children.

Extra fun, extra learning

Extracurricular activities let your youngster explore hobbies and find friends with similar interests. He might join an art club, a robotics group, or a sports team, for instance. To find options, check in the school office or on the school website.

Worth quoting

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” *Nelson Mandela*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Which side of a duck has the most feathers?

A: The outside!



Great year ahead

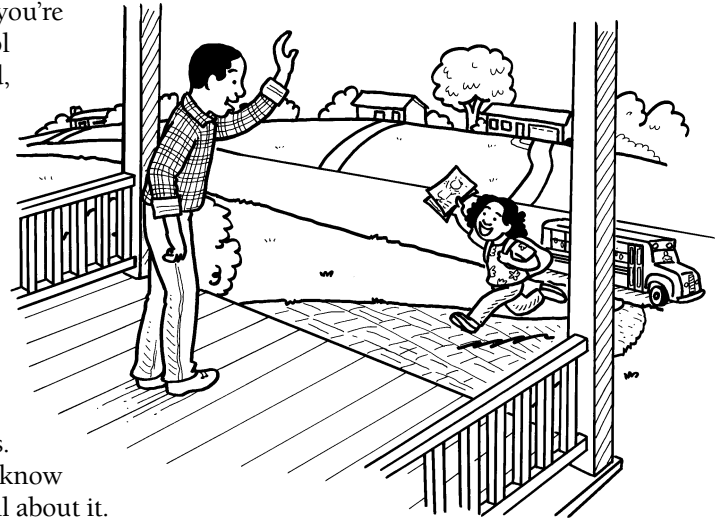
Showing your child you’re excited about the school year will get her excited, too. Encourage her to share what she learns and to make the most of each school day with these strategies.

“What will you learn today?”

Talk about your youngster’s day at school *before* it happens. In the morning, let her know you can’t wait to hear all about it. She’ll be on the lookout for things to tell you. She might even jot down notes to remember the highlights (a science experiment she enjoyed, the words to a song she sang in music class).

“Show me what you did!”

Ask your child to demonstrate something she learned. Perhaps she’ll show you how to measure the area of a room or write a line of code. You’ll get to see what she’s working on in school. Plus, explaining something out loud will help



her understand and remember it—and build her confidence.

“What’s new this year?”

Each school year brings something exciting that your youngster couldn’t do the year before. Maybe she’ll go to recess on a different playground, join the chorus, or change classes for math or reading. Build enthusiasm by talking up these experiences in the first weeks of school, and keep her motivated by following up as the year goes on.♥

Team up for success

Teamwork is an important part of life in school *and* at home. Try fun games like these to help your youngster practice cooperating with others to reach a common goal:

- Line up, and pass a balloon from one person to another without dropping it—using anything but your hands.
- Stand in a circle, and hold hands.

Then, have everyone turn around so they’re facing the opposite direction. The catch? You can’t let go of each other’s hands!♥



Organized all day long

Being organized can reduce stress and make the school day go more smoothly. Here's a checklist that will help.

Morning

- ❑ Show your child how to set an alarm that will wake him up in time to get ready for school.
- ❑ On a sheet of paper, help him draw or list morning tasks, such as "make bed" and "brush teeth." Let him post the list where he can see it (say, by his bed or on the bathroom mirror).



After school

- ❑ Have your youngster go through his backpack to take out homework and throw away trash. To store work he wants to save, he might use folders or a shoebox.
- ❑ Ask him to place papers for you in a special spot, perhaps a basket. Look them over, and sign papers as needed.

Nighttime

- ❑ Before bed, your child should put needed items in his backpack. *Examples:* completed assignments, signed permission slips, show-and-tell objects.
- ❑ Suggest that he pick out clothes and choose breakfast foods for the next day. He could get a head start by setting out cereal, fresh fruit, and a bowl and spoon.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

A homemade calendar

Encourage your child to use a calendar this school year by having her make her own. Follow these steps.



1. Label. Have her draw a calendar page for each month, labeling the month and days of the week. She can refer to a real calendar to fill in the dates.

2. Illustrate. What does each month make her think of? Let your youngster illustrate the top of each sheet—maybe she'll draw herself making new friends in September and painting pumpkins in October.

3. Fill in. Now she can write in regular events (library day on Mondays, spelling quizzes on Fridays). As the year goes on, she could add assignment due dates, tests, or other reminders.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Building knowledge—on a budget

I heard that giving your kids lots of experiences in the community provides "background knowledge" that helps them succeed in school. We're on a tight budget, so I looked into outings for my daughter, Carly, that don't cost a lot.

First, we searched online for free days at nearby museums. I even saw an ad for "Museum Day Live!" on September 23, when many museums offer two free tickets per family. Carly picked out one on pioneer life and another with hands-on engineering projects.

Then, at the farmers' market, someone mentioned a farm that gives free tours. We visited last Saturday, and Carly got to pick apples and see how cows are milked. I'm glad Carly is having new experiences—and we are sticking to our budget.

Editor's note: See smithsonianmag.com/museumday/museum-day-live-2017/ for more information about Museum Day Live!♥



Q & A

How to manage screen time

Q: My son could spend hours watching videos or using apps. How can I set reasonable limits?

A: The goal should be for your son to have enough "unplugged" time to finish schoolwork, be with family and friends, get exercise, and relax. Experts suggest coming up with a plan that suits your family.

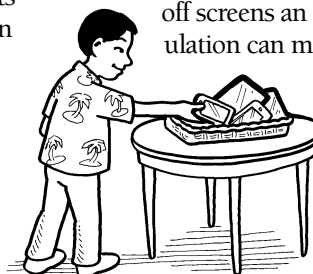
Think about what your youngster uses devices for. A fifth grader may need a computer for homework, while a younger child might simply play on a tablet. Then, set limits that make sense.

Maybe you'll decide on a half-hour of screen time on school days (after homework is done) but give him an hour a day on weekends.

It also helps to name times for everyone to stay off screens, perhaps during meals and car rides. Also, consider turning off screens an hour before bed—the stimulation can make it harder to fall asleep.

Note: Set aside a place for stowing devices so they're out of sight.

To create a plan, see healthychildren.org/English/media/Pages/default.aspx.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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