

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

January 2012

Van Vleck Independent School District
John R. O'Brien, Superintendent



SHORT NOTES

Just because

Does your child love science experiments? Or did she enjoy a book her teacher read aloud? From time to time, send a note or an email to let the teacher know what your youngster likes about school. Teachers appreciate hearing good news from parents—and it helps them get to know students better.

Winter mornings

It's dark out, the alarm has gone off twice, and your youngster is still in bed. Sound familiar? Try turning on several lights and playing upbeat music or a funny audiobook. This will help your child feel more energetic and begin to get ready for school.

Be a good neighbor

This year, encourage your family to do at least one volunteer activity per season. During colder months, you might deliver food for Meals on Wheels or collect gloves and coats to donate to shelters. When it's warm, consider planting trees at schools or parks or participating in neighborhood cleanup days.

Worth quoting

"A library is infinity under a roof."
Gail Carson Levine

JUST FOR FUN

Student: "I was born in California."

Teacher: "Which part?"

Student: "All of me."



Friendship matters

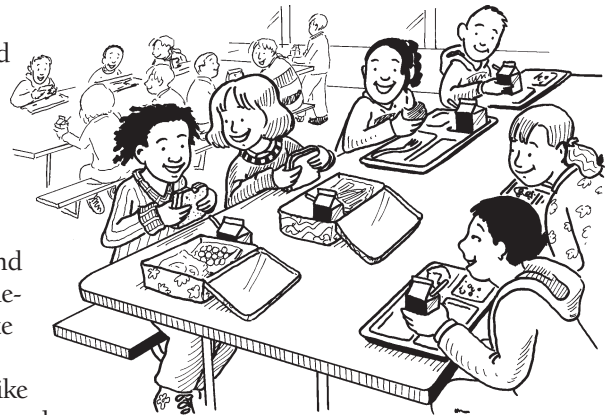
Children who have friends tend to do better in school and enjoy it more. Share these ideas to help your youngster make and keep friends.

Start with one

Just one strong friendship can give your child the skills and confidence to build others. Role-play reaching out to a classmate she'd like to know better. She might say, "Nice lunch box. I like fairy tales, too." Remind her to make eye contact, smile, and ask questions ("What's your favorite fairy tale?").

Share good times

Give your youngster opportunities to strengthen bonds with old friends and to find new ones. She could join after-school activities (computer club, chorus) and attend special events (spirit night, math fair). At neighborhood playgrounds and basketball courts, suggest that she be friendly and play with other children so she can make friends who live nearby.



Treat friends like treasures

Your child can be a good friend by remembering that each person is valuable. Ask her to tell you what she likes best about her friends (good sense of humor, fun to play games with). Also, encourage her to show friends that she cares by being supportive when things are going well ("Congrats on the home run!") and not so well ("Sorry you're sick—I'll bring over some magazines after school").♥

Nouns, verbs, and more

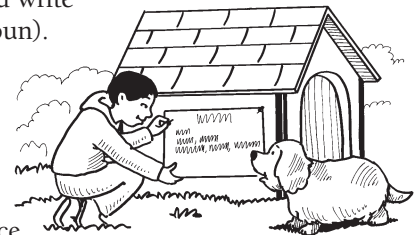
Knowing about parts of speech can make your child a better writer. Here are two fun ways to practice.

1-2-3 poem. Have your youngster write a noun (person, place, or thing) on a piece of paper. On the next line, he should write two adjectives (words that describe the noun).

Below that he can add three verbs (action words) about the noun. *Example:*

Dog
Soft, furry
Sleeping, running, fetching.

Fill-in-the-blank story. Write a sentence with one or more missing words ("Once upon a time, there was a _____"). Underneath each blank, write the part of speech that should go there (adjective, noun). Your child fills in the blanks ("colorful rainbow") and adds his sentence. Take turns until you agree that your tale is finished. ♥



Real-life math

When your child closes his math book, the learning doesn't have to end. Try these suggestions for fitting math skills into everyday activities:

- Appoint your child scorekeeper for family games. He can practice doing math in his head by adding up points for Yahtzee, Scrabble, or Hearts.
- At the grocery store, ask your youngster to estimate 2 lb. of green beans or 3 lb. of potatoes. Then, let him check the weights on the produce scale.



- How much space does he need for a jigsaw puzzle? Have him look at the dimensions on the box (say, 18" x 24") and use a ruler or yardstick to find a spot that's at least 18" wide and 24" long.
- How long will it take to fold a load of laundry or drive to the bank? Suggest that he write down his estimate and then time the task on a cell phone or car clock.

- When you bake, put your youngster in charge of measuring ingredients (1 cup milk, ½ tsp. salt) and finding the right-sized pan (11" x 7", 13" x 9").♥



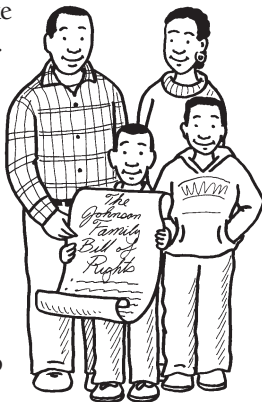
PARENT TO PARENT

Family Bill of Rights

When my son Jack studied the Bill of Rights, his teacher did something that I thought was clever. She used it to help the kids come up with classroom rules. They listed students' rights and made a rule to protect each one. For example, "Be quiet in class" goes with "the right to learn."

I decided that we would use the Bill of Rights to make household rules.

Just like the class, we started with our rights. Jack and his brother came up with "the right to share your opinion" and "the right to privacy." Then, we added a rule to each one ("speak respectfully" and "knock before entering someone's room").

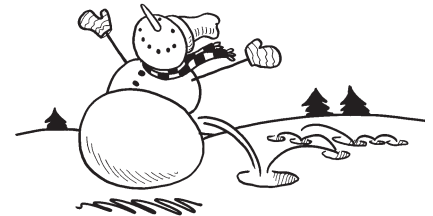


I think linking rights with rules is helping the boys understand why rules are important. And our household is running more smoothly lately!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Snowy fun

Even when there's snow on the ground, your family can get outdoor exercise. Here are two games for everyone to play.



Snowman relay

Collect two sets of snowman accessories (hat, scarf, carrot, buttons), and place each set in a separate bucket at one end of the yard. Divide your family into teams, and have each team build a snowman at the other end of the yard. Then, team members run to the bucket one at a time, grab one accessory, and put it on the snowman. The first team to complete a snowman wins.

Snow-hop

Follow in each other's footprints with this snowy version of hopscotch. Let your child create a hopscotch course in the snow by hopping forward 10 times, landing each time on either one foot or two feet. Everyone else must hop the same way he did so they land in his footprints. Keep playing until each person gets a chance to be the leader.♥

Q & A

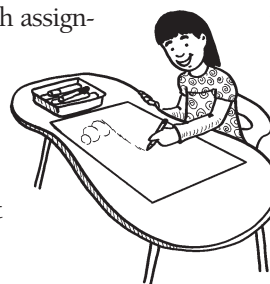
Dealing with perfectionism

Q: My daughter is a perfectionist. She'll erase handwriting that isn't perfect or throw away a drawing if she makes a mistake. How should we handle this?

A: It's great that your daughter sets high standards for herself. But as you've discovered, perfectionism has its down side. To help her get through assignments without becoming frustrated or sidetracked, suggest that she finish an entire page without erasing. Then, she can go back and decide what she can let go and fix what she really isn't happy with.

When she draws a picture, encourage her to think of it as a rough draft. She might relax if she knows her first attempt doesn't have to be perfect. Then, if she starts over, have her save her drafts so she can look back and see how much she's improving. This can help her be happy with progress rather than perfection.

Finally, treat imperfections as a normal part of life so she can learn to take pride in doing her best. For instance, if she brings home an almost-perfect test, say something like "Your studying really paid off" rather than "Wow! You got only one answer wrong!"♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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