

# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

October 2015



Horace W. Porter School

Mrs. Gwinell, Principal/Mrs. Polakowski, Counselor

## SHORT NOTES

### Enjoy poetry

It's fun to think about what a poem might mean. Let your youngster check out a volume of poetry from the library, and take turns reading aloud from it. Talk about what the poet could be saying. Your child will work on reading comprehension as she discovers the joy of poetry.

### Support for special needs

If your youngster struggles with friendships because of a disability, a social skills group may help. He'll practice strategies like starting conversations, listening to what others say, and waiting his turn to speak. Plus, he might make friends he can get together with outside of the group. *Tip:* Ask your child's school counselor, doctor, or therapist to recommend a group.

### Promote self-confidence

Nothing builds success like success itself, so give your youngster plenty of chances to shine. Let her pursue her interests—even if they're not what you would have chosen for her. Or encourage her to learn a new hobby. Feeling capable is a great confidence booster.

### Worth quoting

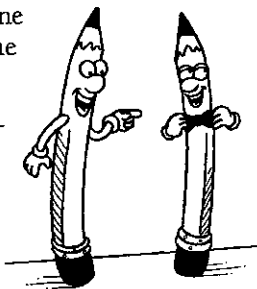
"Be sure you put your feet in the right place, then stand firm."

Abraham Lincoln

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What did one pencil say to the other?

**A:** You're looking sharp!



## Positive attention = positive behavior

A little attention goes a long way toward helping your child behave well. Here are loving ways to inspire better behavior.

### Announce a "time-in"

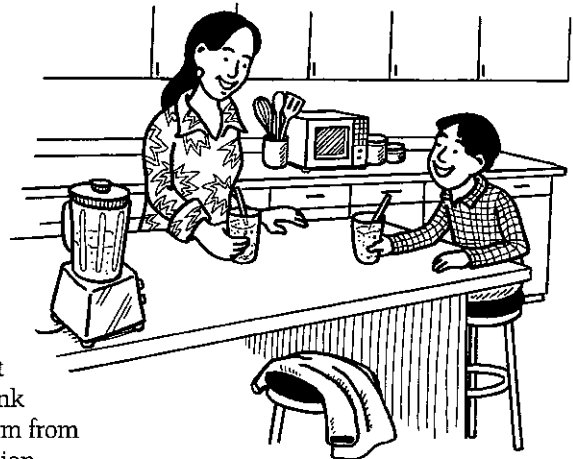
It's the "opposite" of a time-out—you and your youngster take a short break together *before* a situation where he tends to misbehave. During your time-in, you might color, play a quick game, or drink smoothies. This may prevent him from acting out to get negative attention.

### Be playful

Pretending or being silly can make things go more smoothly. For example, to prevent your child from dragging his feet while getting ready for school, you could say, "Let's pretend we're astronauts. T-minus 10 minutes to blastoff!" Your playful discipline may not work every time, but your youngster just might discover that it's fun to cooperate.

### Inspire a turnaround

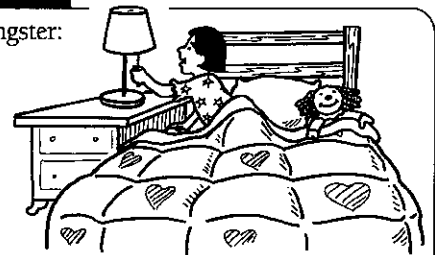
Steer your child toward better behavior while you run errands by giving him jobs to do. In a store, you could say, "Okay, you're the leader. Can you find the garden department?" Or at the bank, have him count the coins while you count the bills. He'll feel important—and be less likely to get bored and misbehave.♥



## Early to bed, ready to learn

Share this interesting fact with your youngster: While she's asleep, her brain is busy organizing and storing information she has learned. Use these guidelines to help her get a good night's sleep and improve learning and memory:

- Elementary school students need 9–11 hours of sleep—experts recommend a range because some kids require more sleep than others. If your child has a hard time waking up or feels drowsy in school, move to an earlier bedtime.
- The light from a computer (or any screen) can prevent your youngster from winding down. Have her turn off anything with a screen at least an hour before bed.♥

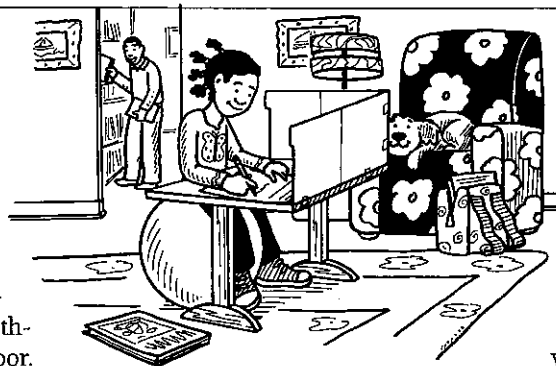


# Hints for homework time

Make homework more pleasant for your youngster with these ideas for starting out strong and staying on task.

**Get comfortable.** Some children concentrate best by sitting at a desk, while others do better sprawled on a bed or the floor. Kids who tend to fidget might think better while balancing on a big exercise ball. Let your child experiment to see what she prefers. Then, she'll be able to focus on her work—not on getting comfortable.

**Get focused.** Your youngster could work in her room, away from siblings and the TV. If she shares a room or likes doing



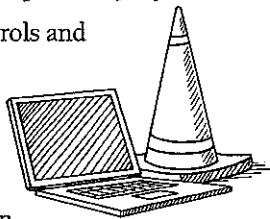
homework in the kitchen or living room, help her set up a file-folder “cubicle” to block out distractions. She should staple together file folders (long edge to long edge) and stand them up to block off her work area. *Idea:* Have her write helpful information on the sides facing her, such as math facts or words she frequently misspells.

**Get started.** Sometimes beginning her homework is the hardest part. Encourage your child to start with an easier assignment—the satisfaction she feels from finishing it may give her momentum to tackle more challenging work. Or she could tell herself that if she completes one subject, she can take a break to ride her scooter or call a friend.♥

## Q & A How to be careful online

**Q:** My son is just starting to use the Internet. We set up “parental controls,” but I know they’re not perfect. Other than watching him every second, what can I do to help him stay safe online?

**A:** Parental controls and supervision are important, but it’s also a good idea to teach your son habits to use on his own.



First, explain that “real life” safety rules apply online. For instance, he shouldn’t talk to strangers or go places that you haven’t approved. When he wants to visit a new website, he needs to let you know so you can make sure it’s appropriate. Keep in mind that sites with user comments or chat features usually aren’t good choices because they allow strangers to post or to talk to him.

Finally, just as in real life, he should tell you right away if a stranger tries to contact him or if he sees something confusing or upsetting.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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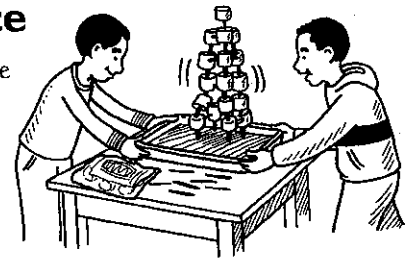


## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Shaky science

Can your child create a building strong enough to withstand an “earthquake”? With this activity, he will practice thinking like an engineer.

1. Together, prepare an 8½ x 11 pan of gelatin dessert. Cover and refrigerate overnight, until set.
2. Have your youngster connect toothpicks with marshmallows to create a building that rises out of the gelatin.
3. Grasping opposite ends of the pan, gently shake it back and forth to create an earthquake. Does his building tumble, or do pieces fall off? He can redesign and test again. Which designs work best?
4. Talk about how engineers might make earthquake-proof buildings. For example, a low, wide building may fare better than a tall, narrow one. Also, which shapes (squares, rectangles, triangles) make the base or walls stronger?♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Fun with family photos

My daughter Annabelle loves storytelling. She often uses her imagination to act out tales with her miniature people and animal figures. When I heard her naming them after our family members and pets, I had an idea.

We gathered family photos, including ones with her grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins. Then, I helped her flatten empty pasta and cracker boxes and glue photos to them. She cut out around each person

and pet and stuck the cardboard figures in globs of play dough to make them stand up.

Now Annabelle likes to act out family stories using the figures. She reenacts beach vacations, holiday meals, and more. Sometimes we play along with her,

each pretending to be a different person. It’s a great way to build her language skills—and to “spend time” with relatives we don’t see often.♥

