Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

March 2021

Parkland School District

Title I Program



SHORT NOTES

Ask about tests

If your child has standardized tests coming up, ask her to show you any study guides or practice tests she completes. You might have her explain how she arrived at some of the answers. Your interest shows her that the tests are important to you and will encourage her to do her best on test day.

Patience pays off

Enjoying leisurely activities with your youngster can teach him the value of patience. For example, make chili together in a slow cooker, then eat a delicious meal you've waited for all day. Play Jenga or build a house of cards—he'll need to take his time to avoid toppling the structure!

Sad, or depressed?

It's normal for kids to feel sad occasionally. But if your child becomes withdrawn or moody, has changes in her eating or sleeping habits, or loses interest in things she normally enjoys, talk to her pediatrician. Those may be signs of depression, and the doctor can recommend next steps.

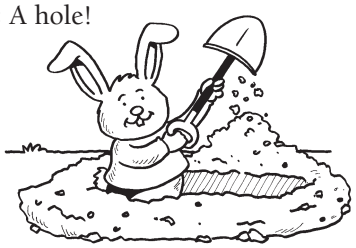
Worth quoting

"Always be a first-rate version of yourself instead of a second-rate version of someone else." *Judy Garland*

JUST FOR FUN

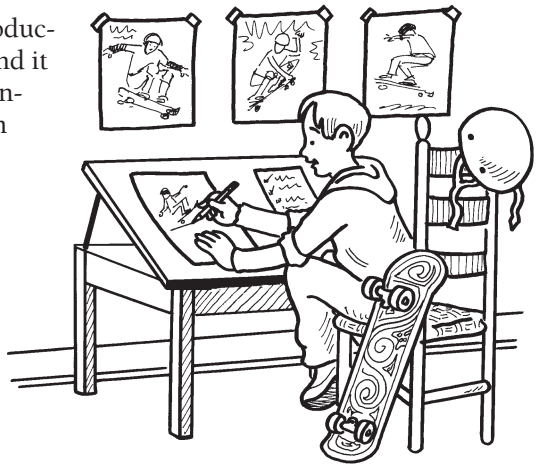
Q: I get bigger every time you subtract something. What am I?

A: A hole!



Learning with hobbies

A hobby gives your child a productive way to spend his free time, and it brings a wealth of real-world learning opportunities. Encourage him to pursue a hobby—and learn from it—with these ideas.



Reading

Let your youngster read to learn more about a hobby that interests him. If he'd like to learn to play chess, he could read a book on opening moves. Or if he collects comic books, he might read about how to draw comics. Then, give him opportunities to share what he learns. For instance, offer to play chess with him or ask to see the comics he sketches.

Writing

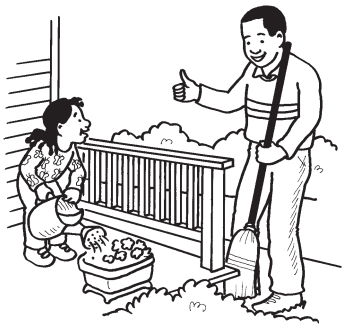
Have your child start a journal or scrapbook about his hobby. A skateboarder can write instructions for tricks he's learning and check off each one as he masters it. A youngster who makes balloon animals could take photos of his completed projects to put in a scrapbook, then write a caption for each.

Math

Help your child find math in his hobby. If he's a runner, suggest that he keep track of his times and distances and then make a graph to see how he improves. Or if he plays a musical instrument, he can work on timing by writing the fractions above the notes ($\frac{1}{4}$ note, $\frac{1}{2}$ note) in sheet music and using them to keep count.♥

Ways to offer encouragement

Going beyond general praise and giving your youngster specific feedback can inspire her to keep up the good work. Consider these examples:



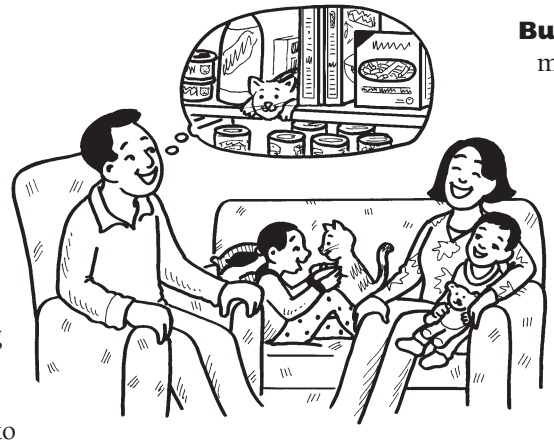
- Instead of "You're so smart," try "You're good at thinking things through." *Why?* You'll avoid labeling your child.
- Instead of "You're so helpful," try "Thanks for doing your chores before I asked." *Why?* Your words will motivate your child to repeat her behavior.
- Instead of "Awesome grade," try "I'm proud of you for studying hard." *Why?* This puts the focus on effort rather than grades only.
- Instead of "What a pretty painting," try "I'm impressed by all the details." *Why?* Your youngster will know exactly what made it appealing to you.♥

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A caring family

A supportive family can give your youngster confidence and teach her to care about others. Use these ways to show one another that you care.

Highlight good news. Let your child write "Family News" on a sheet of paper and tack it to a bulletin board. When something good happens (her big sister is accepted to college, you get a new job), have her post it on the board. Encourage everyone to add a comment to each news item. ("Way to go, Mom!")



Build each other up. When a family member is disappointed or frustrated, chances are someone in your house has been in a similar situation. Ask that person to talk about her experience and how she handled it. For example, your youngster might tell her little brother, "I was sad when I couldn't have a birthday party with my friends because of the pandemic. But we had fun playing games together on Zoom."

Laugh together. Humor can relieve stress and strengthen bonds. Many families have a collection of "inside" jokes and stories. Tell them frequently, and share a good laugh. ("Remember when we found the cat on the top shelf of the pantry?")♥

Q & A Healthy snacks

Q: *The only snacks my daughter wants to eat are cookies and chips. What should I do?*

A: Try suggesting fun, creative ways your child can prepare nutritious snacks. You'll get her invested in making healthy ones that she'll want to eat.

For instance, have her layer trail mix ingredients in a clear jar. Perhaps she'll use whole-grain cereal pieces, dried fruit, and nuts or seeds. She could store the jar on the counter with a scoop equaling one serving.

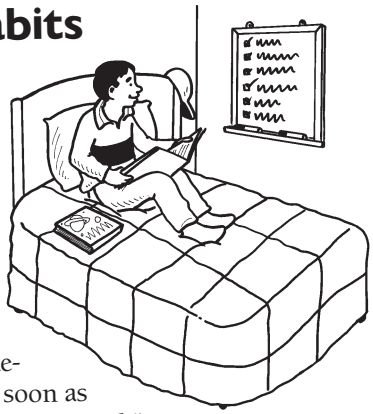


She might also make colorful, single-serving veggie bags to keep front and center in the refrigerator. In separate zipper bags, she can put raw (rinsed) vegetables, such as broccoli florets, carrots, grape tomatoes, and snap peas.

Finally, try to avoid buying empty-calorie snacks like chips and cookies so she's not tempted by less-healthy options.♥

PARENT TO PARENT Strong work habits

Each year it was the same pattern: My son Luis started off the school year strong, but then his work habits slid in the second half. This year was no exception, so I suggested that Luis make a checklist to keep himself on track.



We talked about his habits, such as waiting until the last minute to study for tests or doing homework in front of the TV. Then for each problem area, he listed a solution on a small whiteboard. He included things like "Study for tests as soon as they're announced" and "Work where I won't be distracted."

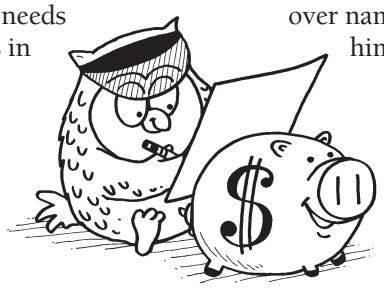
Luis hung his whiteboard in his room. He reviews it before he starts working each day, then puts a check mark beside each good habit he uses. He's happy when he shows me he's checked off all his boxes—and I'm relieved to see him staying on track!♥

ACTIVITY CORNER Smart spending starts now

Learning to make smart financial decisions will help your child now and in the future. Try these activities when you shop together.

Identify needs and wants

Make a grocery list, and ask your youngster to highlight needs in one color and wants in another. For example, he could use a green highlighter for milk and toilet paper and a yellow one for ice cream and popcorn. Explain that you'll shop for needs first, then wants if there's money left in your grocery budget.



Go on a *saving* spree

How much money can your child save your family by choosing generics over name-brand products? Have him write down the prices for both versions of each item. When you finish shopping, he can subtract to find the savings for each product, then add up all the savings to find the total.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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