

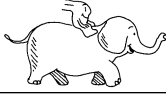
Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

September 2014

Torrance Unified School District
Ben Egan, Director - State & Federal Projects



SHORT NOTES

Car kit

Make the most of the time your youngster spends in the car by helping her put together a learning kit. Use a plastic storage bin or reusable grocery bag, and include books, paper, pencils, a ruler, and crayons. That way, your child can read, write, and draw when you're on the go.

Let's laugh

Laughter relieves stress, so try to fit in humor on even the busiest days. Show your youngster a funny photo you saw, tell him something hilarious that happened at work, post a comic strip on the refrigerator, or read a joke you enjoyed. Encourage him to share humor with you, too.

Handbook review

Your child's school handbook contains a lot of important information. Look through it together—you'll both be familiar with policies about attendance, grades, clothing, and more. Then, keep it in a handy spot, and refer to it if you have a question.

Worth quoting

"Having fun isn't hard when you've got a library card!"
Arthur the Aardvark

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What goes through towns, up and down hills, and around corners, but doesn't move?

A: A road.



Back-to-school routines

A good day at school begins and ends with a pleasant routine at home. Try these ideas for establishing good habits with your child.

A fresh start

A calm morning can help your youngster go to school with a positive attitude. Build an extra 10 minutes into his wake-up time so he won't be rushed if he spills food on his shirt or misplaces his glasses. Also, let him think of tasks he could do the night before, such as showering or putting his musical instrument by the front door.



Backpack check

Use your child's backpack to spark conversations about school. Sit together while he goes through it, and talk about what's inside. If he shows you his report on elephants, you might say, "I didn't know they could eat 300 pounds of food in a day!" or "What was the most interesting thing you learned about elephants?"

Screen-time limits

Large doses of TV, video games, and apps can distract your youngster from his "job": being a student. Encourage him to spend free time playing outside with friends or reading for pleasure. *Note:* Experts recommend no more than two hours of screen time per day (and many parents limit it further).♥

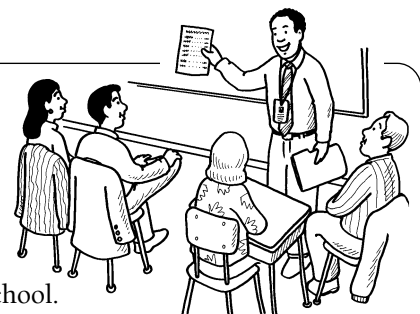
Communication counts

Your youngster's teacher wants to hear from you! Here's how to open the lines of communication.

● **Attend events.** Back-to-school night is a great starting place for getting to know the teacher. Introduce yourself, and tell him something your child especially likes about school.

● **Be a team player.** You and the teacher have the same goal: for your youngster to succeed. If he shares a concern about her progress or behavior, ask how you can help. At home, make nice comments about the teacher.

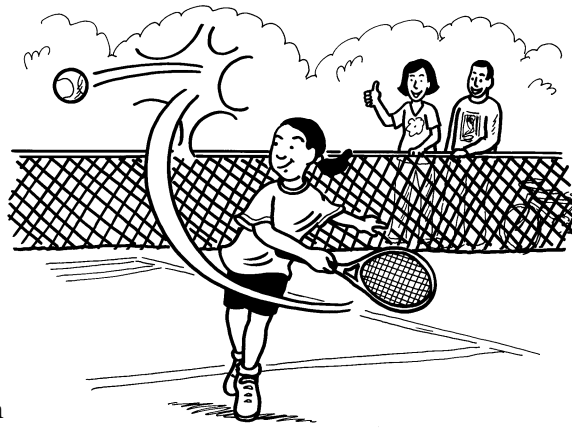
● **Stay in touch.** Tell the teacher about any changes in your child's life, such as the birth of a sibling or a separation or divorce.♥



The power of grit

What is *grit*? The dictionary defines it as “mental toughness and courage.” Grit comes in handy when your youngster needs to do something that’s difficult for her. Consider the following advice for helping her develop this important trait.

Learn from struggles. Is your child having a hard time learning the times tables or serving a tennis ball? Remind her of a past struggle that she overcame. Maybe she fell while learning to ride a bike or needed speech therapy to pronounce her Rs. Explain that she

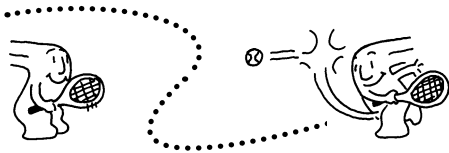


was successful because she kept trying, and the same can happen here.

Reach for courage.

Tell your youngster that everyone has courage—it’s just a matter of finding it! When she is anxious about something (class presentation, science test), ask her to name a person she considers brave. For example, per-

haps she thinks her aunt has courage because she’s a police officer. Then, point out that even she probably feels nervous at work sometimes.♥



Talking about money

Q: How can we teach our son to be responsible with money?

A: One way is just to start talking to your son about money. Try making financial decisions out loud so he can learn from you how to spend wisely. You could say, “I want new curtains, but our car tires need to be replaced soon, so we have to save money for those instead.”



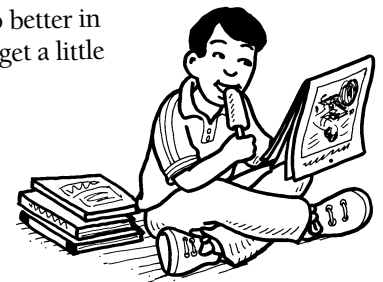
Also, have him practice making his own choices about money. If he gets gift money or an allowance, encourage him to think through spending decisions like you did. “These trading cards look cool, but I’m going to keep saving for that Lego kit.” Let him know he’s doing a good job when he avoids an impulse buy and plans responsibly.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Calendar-inspired reading

Strong readers tend to do better in all subjects. With these activities, your child will get a little extra reading practice on a regular basis:

- September is National Blueberry Popsicle Month! Encourage your youngster to find unusual day, week, or month celebrations in library books or online—he’ll be reading nonfiction and doing research. He might also look up birthdays of famous people, like his favorite authors and athletes, and add those special days to your calendar, too.
- Take turns writing a question or challenge of the week on Sunday’s calendar square. *Example:* “A baby llama is a *cria*. Find other names for different baby animals.” Throughout the week, family members can read books, magazines, or websites to find answers and share what they discover.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Fun ways to strengthen bonds

Once school starts, our family doesn’t get to hang out together as much as we do over the summer. This year, we decided to make a list of activities we could do in 15 minutes or less, and our goal is to do one every day.

Our kids had fun thinking of ideas. For example, our daughter wrote, “Take silly family photos,” and our son said, “Have a limbo contest.”

Other suggestions included looking for constellations, playing hopscotch, and making s’mores.

We posted the list on our bulletin board, and now we take turns picking one activity every day. It’s motivating us to make time for each other. And we are constantly adding to the list, so I don’t think we’ll run out of new things to do anytime soon!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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