

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

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Torrance Unified School District
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SHORT NOTES

Every day counts

As the school year winds down, continue to make sure that your youngster is in class every day. Schedule family vacations and events outside of school hours, and try to do the same for doctor and dental appointments. You'll show her that school is important, and she's likely to do better on her final report card.

Cell phone?

Is your child already asking for a cell phone? Agree upon an age when you'll discuss it (say, in middle school). You might point out that cell phones are expensive and that he is at school or near adults who have phones available. Plus, tell him you'd rather he do fun things (play with friends, go outside) than be on the phone.

My to-do list

Your youngster will accomplish more if she starts each day with a plan. Suggest that she make a to-do list on a whiteboard or with pencil and paper. *Example:* 1. Return library books. 2. Study math facts. 3. Water the plants. *Tip:* Encourage her to get a jump start by making her list each evening for the next day.

Worth quoting

"Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody's going to know whether you did it or not."

Dorothy Draper

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why did the man throw a bucket of water out the window?



A: He wanted to see the waterfall.

Make respect a habit

Your youngster will be more likely to be treated with respect if he acts respectfully. Help him learn to respect people, property, and himself with these suggestions.

People

How does your child want to be treated? His answer can give him insight into how he should treat others. For example, if he doesn't want his little brother taking his toys without asking, he can remember to get permission before borrowing something. Or maybe he wants to listen to his favorite music without friends judging his taste. When a friend who prefers hip-hop is visiting, he could suggest that they take turns picking songs.

Property

Together, walk through your home and brainstorm ways to respect belongings so they don't get damaged or lost. In the foyer, your youngster might point out that people should remove muddy shoes before walking on the carpet. Or in the



living room, he might say that DVDs and CDs go in their cases and on their shelves when they're not being used.

Self

Have your child draw a self-portrait. Around his body, he can write ways to respect himself. Near his mouth he could put "Eat nutritious foods," and by his arms and legs he might write "Exercise," since those are habits that show respect for his body. Near his brain he can write "Try my hardest." He'll have a picture of himself at his best! ♥

Learning with arts and crafts

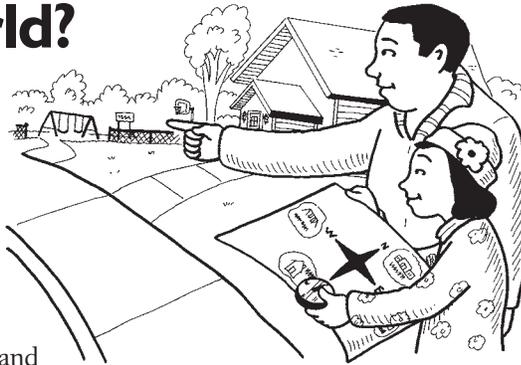
Doing craft projects is a fun way for your child to show you what she's learning in school. Here are a few ideas:

- When she plays with clay or play dough, she might mold a sun and planets. Let her display her solar system in a shoebox lined with black construction paper.
- Give her craft sticks and glue. Suggest that she make picture frames in geometric shapes (square, triangle, trapezoid). She can frame family photos or her artwork from school.
- Let her cut a variety of materials (wrapping paper, wallpaper samples, aluminum foil) into tiny pieces. On a sheet of paper, she can write her vocabulary words in glue and scatter the scraps on top. ♥



Where in the world?

Geography is about more than memorizing locations of countries and cities. With these activities, your child can learn first-hand about directions and see where her family came from.



My neighborhood. On a sheet of paper, have your youngster draw a *compass rose* (a symbol with arrows pointing north, east, south, and west). Then, go outside together, and help her determine which direction is which (use

an actual compass, or think about where the sun rises and sets). Take a walk in each direction, and ask her to draw a landmark (playground, bus stop) on her sheet. When she's finished, she will have an illustrated compass rose of your area.

My family. Let your child trace your family's heritage on a world map. She could put a sticker on each spot where family members

have lived and draw arrows to show their path. Ask what she can tell about the countries by looking at the map. Say her grandparents came from the Philippines. She might notice that the country is made of islands, that its capital is Manila, and that it must be warm because it's near the equator.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

Survey says...

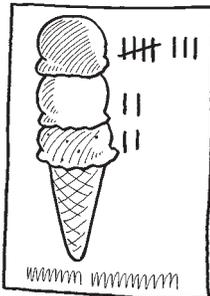


Polling family members is a fun way for your child to practice designing a survey and calculating and reporting results.

Suggest that your youngster survey relatives about their favorite things (ice cream flavors, authors, movies). He can make ballots listing questions on a sheet of paper along with options for each one.

Example:

- What is your favorite ice cream flavor?
- ___ chocolate
- ___ vanilla
- ___ strawberry
- ___ other



Ask him to copy the ballots and pass them out to family members. (He can call relatives who don't live with you and ask survey questions over the phone.) When everyone has voted, have him tally the results and report the number of people who chose each option.

Variation: An older child can calculate the fraction of relatives that prefer each item. For example, if he surveys 12 people and 8 choose chocolate, he can report that $\frac{2}{3}$ of your family likes chocolate ice cream best.♥

Q & A

Help with socializing

Q: My son has high-functioning autism, and he doesn't get invited to other kids' homes. He works on social skills with his therapist—how can I give him "real-life" practice?

A: Start by talking to your son's teacher. She might recommend a classmate who would enjoy playing with your child. You can contact the parent and suggest meeting at a local playground or at your home.

Before the playdate, brainstorm conversation topics with your son. As he plays, quietly remind him to ask about the other child's interests. ("We'll talk more about your train collection later. Ask him if he collects anything.")

Also, consider starting a playgroup with other parents whose children have autism. Take turns meeting at each other's houses, and have parents stay to help the youngsters play and carry on conversations.

Check out community resources, too. Ask your son's therapist about social skills groups, or call the parks and recreation department to find sports that welcome children with special needs.♥



PARENT TO PARENT

Carpool games

Between driving to school and other activities, we're in the car a lot. And by this time of year, my daughter and her friends start to get tired of it.

One day, I taught the girls a travel game my family played when I was little. We passed around a bag of Scrabble tiles, and each person pulled out seven. Then, we had to find a word that started with a letter we drew. As we spotted each word, we returned that letter to the bag. The first player to get rid of her letters won the game.

The girls invent games, too. One favorite is a scavenger hunt. Each child brings a list of five things, like a sign with a misspelled word or a blue car. They trade lists and try to find the items.

They also enjoy the "foil game." Everyone brings one household object wrapped in aluminum foil. They pass them around and try to guess what's inside. The games help pass the time, and the girls get to be creative, too.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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