

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

October 2012

Vincent Elementary School

## SHORT NOTES

### Plan ahead for conferences

Does your youngster's school have parent-teacher conferences coming up? Try to plan ahead if you need to take time off work (or ask the teacher if she's available before or after hours). If you're concerned about your child's progress, save graded assignments to take along and discuss.

### Handwriting counts

Your youngster might use computers for part of his work, which can leave him (and you) wondering how important handwriting is. Remind him that his teacher needs to be able to easily read his written assignments. Also, learning to print will help a beginning reader recognize letters, while an older student needs legible handwriting for note taking.

### Healthy snacks

If your child takes a snack to school, help her pack a healthy one. Include fruits and vegetables, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. For example, one day she might take raw green beans or zucchini sticks, and another time she could pack a wheat wrap with vegetable cream cheese (in an insulated bag).

### Worth quoting

"Sometimes your joy is the source of your smile, but sometimes your smile can be the source of your joy."

Thich Nhat Hanh

## JUST FOR FUN

**Gina:** There are only 11 letters in the alphabet.

**Teacher:** No, there aren't.

**Gina:** Yes, there are: t-h-e a-l-p-h-a-b-e-t.



## Let me think...

No matter what your child is studying in school, she needs to be a good thinker! The ability to imagine different possibilities, solve problems, and use logic can always help her do her best. Here are some suggestions for sharpening her thinking skills.

**Ask questions.** When you have conversations with your youngster, try to choose questions that have more than one possible answer. Say you're talking about favorite colors—you could ask, "How do you think someone picks a favorite color?" If she says, "I don't know," give her a minute to think, and she's likely to come up with a reply. If not, share an idea to get her going. ("I think colors remind us of happy memories. Light blue makes me think of the sky on a beautiful day.")

**Encourage problem solving.** Have your child solve everyday problems on her own. When she asks how to build a marble run or why her computer program won't open, avoid rushing to the rescue. Instead, you might say, "Hmm,



I wonder what you could try," or, "Let's look for something that could help." She might draw a diagram of the marble run or make a checklist of computer troubleshooting tips (make sure cables are connected, reboot).

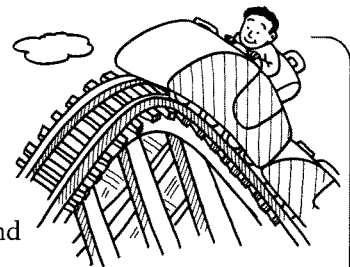
**Play thinking games.** Your youngster's brain will be sharper if she exercises it regularly. Take turns saying two words that are related to a third word. For instance, if you say *piano* and *lock*, your child could say *key* (a piano has keys, a key opens a lock). Then, she gets to give you a word pair. *Other examples:* a tree and a car both have trunks, and a ruler and a sock both have a foot. ♥

## Learning to be patient

It pays to be patient. Talk to your youngster about these two benefits of learning to wait.

**1. Accomplish more.** Your child can turn wait time into work time. Say he needs his teacher's help with a worksheet, but she's talking to another student. He can do the parts that he understands and save his questions for when the teacher is available.

**2. Enjoy the results.** Teach your youngster the saying "Good things come to those who wait." Together, brainstorm things that improve with time. For instance, fruit tastes better if you wait for it to ripen. Or the longer it takes to get to the top of a roller coaster, the more fun it is to ride down. How many examples can your child come up with? ♥



# Fall rituals for families

This fall, consider taking a family field trip near your home. Your youngster will discover what your community has to offer—and you might start a new family tradition.

## Find events

With your child, look in the newspaper or online for events like farm tours and fall festivals. Choose one, and encourage him to read more about it. He could learn which varieties of apples an orchard grows or



see what activities are going on at a pumpkin patch festival (face painting, hayrides).

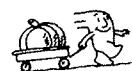
## Take a tour

When you arrive at your destination, let your youngster be your tour guide. He can read signs and pick up brochures. Then, he might point out where different kinds of apple trees are located or lead your family through a corn maze.

## Look back

At home, follow up on your field trip. You might have family members taste-test red, yellow, and green apples, and your child could graph your favorites. Or cut open a pumpkin, and estimate the number of seeds inside. Let your youngster count the seeds and announce who came closest. ♥

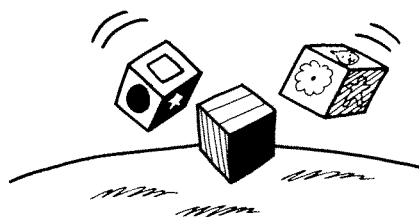
## ACTIVITY CORNER



## Roll and paint

A roll of these “dice” can help your child paint her next masterpiece.

**Materials:** 3 plain wooden block cubes, fine-tipped permanent markers in several colors, paper, paints, paintbrush



Have your youngster decorate the six sides of one cube with different shapes (circle, square, star), another with different colors (red, yellow, blue), and a third with objects (flower, person, cat). Then, she can paint a picture inspired by what she rolls. If she gets a star, yellow, and a flower, she might paint a field of sunflowers under a starry sky. Or if she rolls a circle, green, and a person, she could paint herself wearing a green dress and a pearl necklace.

*Idea:* Join her by rolling the dice and painting your own picture, too. ♥

## Q & A

### Participating in class

**Q:** My daughter’s teacher says she rarely raises her hand in class. I was surprised to hear that, since she talks so much at home! What should we do?

**A:** It’s not unusual for children to feel hesitant about speaking in front of a group. At home, have your daughter practice one or two things she plans to say that day. For example, if the class will be discussing a book, she might tell you about her favorite character.

Also, consider asking the teacher if your youngster can share a special interest with her classmates. That might encourage her to open up. If the class is studying Native Americans, for instance, she could take in beads she has collected or arrowheads she has found.

Finally, ask the teacher how your child is doing in general. If she doesn’t participate because she doesn’t know the answers, she might need extra help. ♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

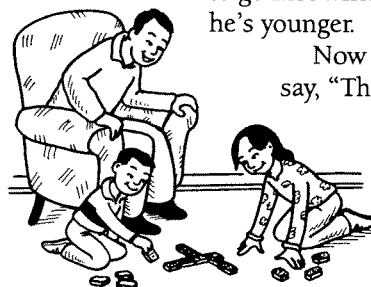
### What is fair?

My kids’ favorite phrase used to be “That’s not fair!” If my son had a slightly bigger serving of potatoes or my daughter got to sit beside me on the couch, I would hear complaints.

Then one day, my son shared something his teacher said during a class meeting: Fairness isn’t everyone getting the exact same thing—it’s each person getting what he needs. That explanation

made a lot of sense, so I asked my children if they could think of examples. My son pointed out that if his sister is sick, it’s fair for her to get extra attention. And my daughter said it’s fair for her brother to go first when we play a game because he’s younger.

Now when I hear one of them say, “That’s not fair!” I ask, “Are you sure?” I remind them of the teacher’s advice and encourage them to think about why it might be fair after all. ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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