

Home & School

CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

December 2014

Vincent Elementary School



SHORT NOTES

Where is it?

If you give your child a U.S. map, how quickly can he find all the cities with NFL teams? Kids tend to be more interested in maps when the locations relate to their interests or lives. Another idea is to show him a state map, and tell him to point out all the cities he has visited or ridden through.

Donate recyclables

Many families will have leftover cardboard boxes, wrapping paper, or greeting cards this winter. Ask your youngster's classroom teacher and art teacher if they could use the items for projects. Sending in recyclables is an easy way to support your child's education and to show her that you're thinking about her school.

Meet the babysitter

When you need a sitter for your youngster, consider letting him meet her ahead of time. Invite her over so your child can show her around your home and tell her what he likes to play with. Afterward, go over rules for homework, TV use, and snacks, and point out safety items (emergency phone numbers, first aid kit, flashlight).

Worth quoting

"No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." *Aesop*

JUST FOR FUN

Lisa: "Do you want to hear a construction joke?"

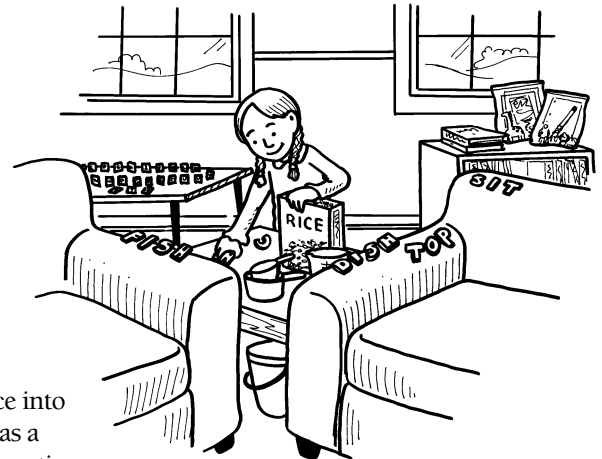
Jack: "Sure."

Lisa: "I'm still working on it."



Learning around the house

Children often like to play school at home. With winter break coming up, encourage your youngster to set up "learning centers" just like her teacher has at school. She'll enjoy being both teacher and student—and she's sure to learn a lot. Here are ideas.



Dig and find

Help your youngster pour rice into a wide, shallow container, such as a baking dish. She could bury magnetic letters in it and dig them up one at a time until she can make a word. Or she might estimate how much rice a bucket will hold and use measuring cups to check. Finally, have her hide small items (paper clip, coin, plastic toys) in the rice and move a magnet through it—she'll discover which items are attracted to it.

Read and perform

Suggest that your youngster pick a few of her books and collect items to act out the stories. She can put each book and its props in a zipper bag. *Example:*

For a story set in a forest, she may get plastic animals. Add paper and pencil so she could write a new opening or an alternate ending. She'll practice reading for meaning as she visualizes the action or thinks of different plot twists.

Order and arrange

Let your child gather things to put in order. For instance, have playing cards that she can stack from 1 (ace) to 10 or Scrabble tiles for her to line up from A to Z. Or write decimals (0.05, 0.7, 1.5) on separate slips of paper for her to arrange from smallest to largest.♥

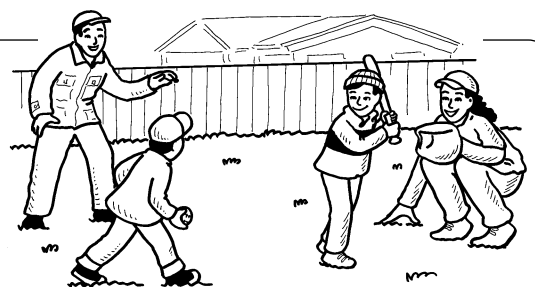
Smooth sailing

Keep the holidays simple—and everyone happy—with these stress-free suggestions:

- Some families just try to do too much! Settle on the one or two holiday traditions that everyone really enjoys, and drop the others.

Tip: Exercise is a known stress-reducer, so include an active tradition like a family softball game or hike.

- Try to stick to your youngster's routine as much as possible. For example, if you have a long drive to Grandma's house, let him ride in his pajamas. He can listen to an audio book and fall asleep in the car at his usual bedtime.♥



Responsible for myself

Who can John count on to make sure his schoolwork gets turned in? John! That's because his parents taught him that he's responsible for his own learning and for the choices he makes. Consider this advice for raising a responsible youngster.

Learning. It's up to your child to listen to his teacher and complete assignments she gives him. Ask him to think of other ways he could take responsibility as a student. He might say he should bring home school library books for a project or let you know if he is struggling with math.



Decisions. If your youngster makes a mistake, encourage him to own up to it. Kids sometimes get into the habit of blaming others. ("Indoor Frisbee was her idea!") You'll help him see the connection between his decision and the consequence by saying something like, "You decided to take your sister's advice, and you broke a vase." *Tip:* When

he does admit responsibility for a mistake, try not to get angry. Instead, ask, "How could you fix it?" or "What did you learn from this?"♥



"Thank you, teacher"

Your child will bring a smile to his teacher's face with homemade gifts like these.

Cookbook

Here's a gift that lets the teacher try some of your family's favorite dishes! Help your youngster collect family recipes from your kitchen or from relatives. He can write and illustrate each one on a piece of paper. Then, have him decorate a cover, punch two holes on the left side of each page, and tie yarn through the holes.



Picture frame

For this colorful idea, your child needs a box of crayons and a picture frame with a wide, flat border. Let him use craft or wood glue to stick crayons or crayon pieces all over the frame. Inside the frame, he could put a class picture or a photo of himself with his teacher.♥



Play with vocabulary

Q: Studying vocabulary words is not my daughter's favorite thing. Are there ways to make it more fun for her?

A: Sure! You could turn study time into game time with ideas like these.

Let your daughter write each word on a muffin tin liner and put the liners in a muffin pan. Take turns tossing a coin into the pan. When it lands on a word, the player can either give its definition or use it in a sentence. If you define or use the word correctly, keep the liner. If not, leave it in the pan. Then, it's the next person's turn.

For the second game, have her write vocabulary words on a beach ball using a washable or dry-erase marker. Toss the ball back and forth. When you catch it, define a word your right hand is touching. The other player has to guess your word based on the definition.

Note: For both games, keep her textbook or a dictionary nearby to check definitions.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Glitter "germs"

Handwashing is one of the best ways to prevent the spread of germs and help keep everyone healthy. This activity will show your child how germs spread—and motivate her to wash up.

1. Ask her to wet her hands, and then sprinkle them with glitter (to represent germs).
2. Let her touch a counter top or door-knob. Next, you touch the same spot. She just shared her

"germs" with you! Point out that the same thing happens with real germs.

3. Have her try to wash the glitter off with water only, and then with soap *and* water. She'll see that she needs soap to get rid of the "germs." Be sure to have her wipe them off the counter, too.

Note: Suggest that she think about her glitter germs to remind herself to wash her hands before meals, after using the bathroom, and when she coughs or sneezes.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
540-636-4280 • rfeustomer@wolterskluwer.com
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