

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

Working Together for School Success

December 2012

Vincent Elementary School



## SHORT NOTES

### My journal

Suggest that your child keep a winter-break journal. Each day, he can draw and write about something he did, like sledding with cousins or watching football. This will help his writing skills stay sharp while school is out. Encourage him to add to his journal each year—he can reread old entries to enjoy favorite winter memories.

### Ready for recess

Your youngster's class probably goes out for recess every day unless it's raining or snowing. Make sure she keeps gloves and a hat in her backpack so she can stay warm while she plays. She might also wear leggings under dresses, and layers that she can remove if she gets too hot indoors.

### Point of view

Show your child that people often see the same things differently. Let everyone look at a magazine photo for 3–5 seconds. Then, ask each person to share the first thing he saw, such as the shiny new car or the sunset in the background. Explain that people's experiences and interests affect what they notice or pay attention to.

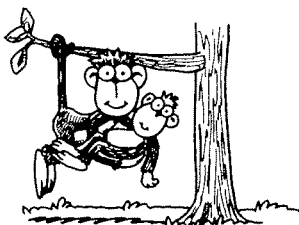
### Worth quoting

"One kind word can warm three winter months." *Japanese proverb*

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What do monkeys have that no other animal has?

**A:** Baby monkeys.



## Knowledge is everywhere

Whether you and your youngster are folding laundry, waiting for the bus, or going to the bank, there is something new for her to learn. Take advantage of everyday experiences to build background knowledge that she can draw on in school. Here's how.

### In the house

Help your child make discoveries while you do chores together. When you fold laundry, have her read the tags. Ask her what materials the clothes are made of (cotton, polyester) and which countries they come from (China, Vietnam). Later, she can find the countries on a map. Or if you're cooking dinner, let her hand you the spices. Talk about how they smell and taste ("Chili powder is spicy. Cinnamon is sweet").

### Around the neighborhood

Everyone your youngster meets can teach her something new. Chat with neighbors while taking a walk or waiting at the bus stop. If someone mentions an interesting job (pilot, florist), encourage your child to ask questions. *Examples:* "How did you learn to fly a plane?" or



"What kinds of flowers do you sell?" When you have guests, invite them to talk about what life is like where they live. Say you are in the country and they are from a city—they might describe riding the subway or working in a skyscraper.

### Out and about

Your community is full of learning opportunities. At a hardware store, point out tools (wrench, drill) and talk about what they're for. If you're at the bank drive-thru, let your youngster put your deposit in the canister and watch it go through the vacuum tube. Also, try to find new places to go. Visit a nature center, for example, and have your youngster read the displays to see what lizards and turtles eat. ♥

## Helping the teacher

An extra pair of hands is a gift that teachers appreciate any time of year. And helping out is one way to show your child that his education is important to you. Consider these tips:

- Let the teacher know what you enjoy doing. If you're a scrapbooker, she might have you use your creativity to decorate bulletin boards. If you like math, she could ask you to help a small group with a game.
- Do you work during the day? Ask the teacher about evening activities you can participate in. You might help organize a parent-child book club or make flyers for the school talent show. ♥



# Set the stage for good behavior

What if you could spend less time disciplining your child and more time enjoying his company? Try these suggestions to encourage good behavior—and to be prepared when he does act out.

**Think ahead.** With a little planning, you can make it easier for your youngster to behave well. Before you go shopping, you



might give him a healthy snack so he won't get hungry and cranky. You could also assign him a special job so he has something fun to focus on. For instance, get a mall map from the information desk, and ask him to locate stores. Or let him read the list of people you're shopping for and make gift suggestions.

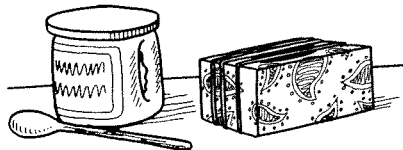
**Respond carefully.** When your child does misbehave, try to pick consequences that you can stick with. If he's throwing a ball indoors during a family gathering, going home right away might not be reasonable. Instead, you could take the ball away and have him find something else to do. If you follow through, he will be more likely to listen next time.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Let's make music!

A family sing-along is a fun way for your youngster to explore music. Get started with these ideas:

- Take turns teaching each other songs. Your child might pick one she learned in school, and you could select one that you remember from childhood. *Idea:* Try "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" or "Three Blind Mice" in rounds. Let your youngster start, and after she sings the first line, you sing from the beginning while she continues the song. She'll need to listen carefully to keep her place!



- Make musical instruments to accompany your songs. Your child can play different types, like *percussion* (drums, tambourine), *wind* (flute, harmonica), and *string* (guitar, violin). For example, a wooden spoon on an oatmeal canister or a coffee can makes a good drum. Or help her create a guitar by wrapping rubber bands of different widths around an empty tissue box.♥



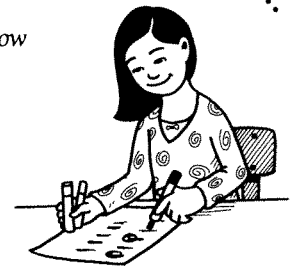
## Q & A

### Learning how to study

**Q:** My daughter has more tests and quizzes this year. How can I help her use good study habits so she can do well?

**A:** Studying is a skill that your daughter can learn and practice. First, have her get into the habit of studying a little each day. That way, she won't need to cram the night before a test or quiz. An evening when she doesn't have much homework is a good time to look over class notes or review multiplication facts, for example.

Also, encourage your child to experiment with different study methods. She might read a science or social studies chapter out loud. She could even record herself and play it back. Or suggest that she use different colored pens to underline or circle parts of spelling words that trip her up (*receive*, *chief*). Trying different strategies will help her find the ones that work best for her.♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

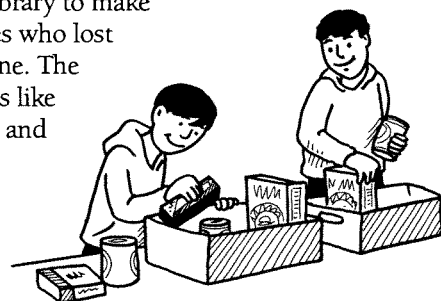
### Family community service

Our older son, Ryan, does community service for high school credit. Recently, our third-grader, Matt, asked if he could volunteer, too.

Ryan asked his civics teacher, who recommended a project that we could all do. We met a group at the library to make care packages for families who lost their homes in a hurricane. The packages included things like soap, toothpaste, cereal, and soup, and our job was to make sure every box got one of each item. Ryan told Matt he was doing a great job, and

he pointed out how grateful the families would feel when they received their packages.

Afterward, Ryan and Matt wanted to do another project together. We checked a few websites, including [unitedway.org](http://unitedway.org) and [volunteermatch.org](http://volunteermatch.org), and found quite a few family volunteer opportunities in our area. Matt is excited about working with his big brother, and I'm happy that he's learning at a young age about helping others.♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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