

Home & School

CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

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SHORT NOTES



Snow day plan

Make sure you have a plan in place for weather-related school closings and delays. You might ask a coworker to swap shifts or see if you could telework when school is canceled. If you can't get home in time for an early closing, find a relative or neighbor to pick up your child from school or meet him at the bus stop.

What's that sound?

Play this game to sharpen your youngster's listening skills. Have her close her eyes while you make a noise. Can she identify the jingle of the dog's leash or the "pop" of the toaster? Trade roles, and let her create a sound for you to figure out.

Support for grandfamilies

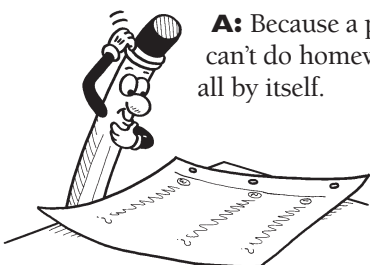
If you're raising a grandchild, ask the school counselor about "grandfamily" support groups. You'll meet other grandparents to swap advice and discuss the joys and challenges of parenting the second time around. Some may even offer grandparent-grandchild activities where your youngster can meet other kids with families like his.

Worth quoting

"If you see a friend without a smile, give him one of yours." *Proverb*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why do you do homework with a pencil?



A: Because a pencil can't do homework all by itself.

Goal setting: A recipe for success

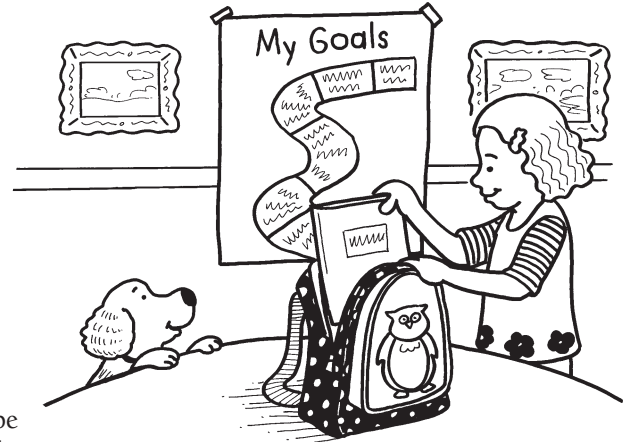
Reaching a goal involves more than just hoping and dreaming. Here's how your child can practice setting, tracking, and achieving goals—skills that will serve her well now and in the future.

Be specific

What would your youngster like to accomplish? Maybe she wants to earn higher grades or become a better gymnast. Suggest that she narrow down the goal so it's more targeted. Her goal might be "I will turn in all of my assignments on time" or "I will move up one level in gymnastics this year."

Map it out

Breaking a goal into small steps makes it feel more manageable. Your child could draw a winding road on paper, add lines to divide it into segments, and write a step in each one. *Examples:* "Put my planner in my



backpack when school ends" or "Do my beam routine five times in a row without falling off." She can color each step as she completes it.

Check in

Support your child in sticking to her plan. Say she falls behind on a long-term project. Together, look at her planner and find slots of time where she can catch up. Or if she has to miss gymnastics class one day, offer ways to practice at home like using a strip of duct tape as a balance beam.♥

Parent helpers

School volunteer opportunities come in all shapes and sizes to fit anyone's schedule. Consider these ways you might help your youngster's school.

● **Contribute supplies.** Offer to save recyclables to use in the classroom. Ask the teacher what he needs—perhaps plastic bottle caps for math games or baby-food jars for snow globes. *Note:* If you have clothes your child has outgrown, find out whether the school nurse could use them.

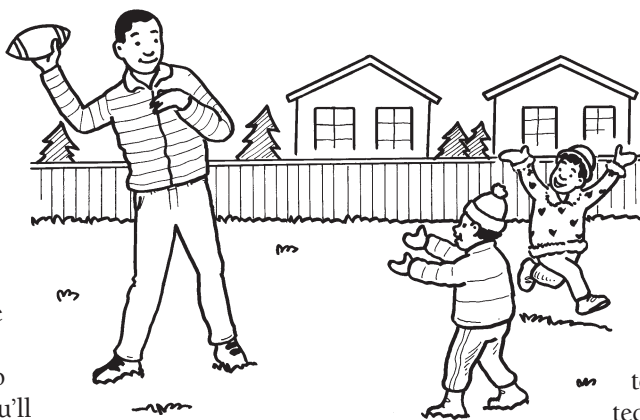
● **Share a talent.** See if you can help with an after-school or evening activity. Love music? Maybe you could tune students' instruments before a concert. If you're a runner, you might help coach a running club. Or if you enjoy arts and crafts, volunteer to make scenery or sew costumes for a play.♥



Screen-free play

Studies show that kids who spend less time in front of screens tend to be healthier and earn higher test scores. Encourage your youngster to enjoy “unplugged” play with these ideas.

Nature time. Electronics don’t grow on trees—so going outside to play is one of the easiest ways to avoid screen time. You and your child can bundle up and go for a walk or throw a football around. You’ll both enjoy being outdoors and spending special time together.



A screen-free corner.

Create a spot for your youngster to store his favorite non-electronic items like jigsaw puzzles, board games, and play dough. He could put them on shelves or in bins and hang up a sign that says “Screen-free zone.” He’ll have an inviting place to exercise his brain without technology.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

A dancing snake

Air currents make a paper “snake” wiggle and dance with this simple science experiment.

Materials: crayons, paper plate, scissors, yarn, lamp



Have your youngster use a crayon to draw a spiral on the paper plate. She can decorate the snake with patterns, then cut it out. Poke a small hole in the snake’s head, and tie on a piece of yarn.

Turn on the lamp, and let your child hold her snake by the yarn at least 1 foot above (not touching) the warm lightbulb. Her snake will dance and spin.

What’s going on? As warm air created by the lamp rises, cooler air moves in to replace it. This constant motion creates air currents that move the snake around.♥

Write organized reports

This three-step strategy will set your youngster up to write a clear, well-organized report.

1. Choose your topic

Say your child is supposed to write about an animal. The process will be more fun if she picks an animal she finds interesting—and her enthusiasm is likely to come through in her writing.

2. Brainstorm questions

What does your youngster want to know about her topic? If she chose penguins, she might decide to research what they eat or how many eggs they lay at a time. She could write each question on a separate index card.

3. Collect facts

Your child can read about penguins in library books and online. As she researches, she should fill each card with facts. She might write information about a penguin’s diet on one card and offspring on another. *Tip:* She can use each card to write one paragraph in her report.♥



Q & A Keep an eye out for bullying

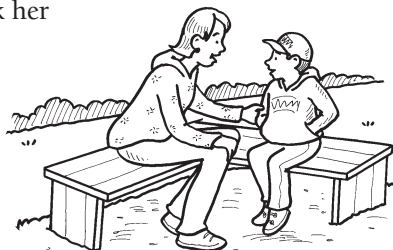
Q: My son has been coming home from school with bruises. He keeps saying he fell at recess, but I worry he’s being bullied. What should I do?

A: Start by talking to his teacher. Tell her what you’ve noticed, and ask if she’s aware of any recess accidents. If she isn’t, let her know you’re concerned about bullying, and ask her to keep an eye out.

Then, ask your son if he has ever felt unsafe in school or if he has seen anyone being hurt or being teased repeatedly.

Also, explain that he should always get adult help right away if anyone is hurting him or someone else. After all, bullying isn’t a problem he’s expected to handle alone, and it can get worse if adults don’t step in.

Once you get the ball rolling, he might open up. If he admits to being bullied, meet with the teacher to make a plan for putting an end to it. And if he doesn’t, the teacher will be aware of the situation and can alert you if she observes bullying.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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