

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

April 2021



SHORT NOTES

Family show-and-tell

Show-and-tell builds your child's speaking and presentation skills—and it's not just for school! Schedule special time each week or month for everyone to share a belonging, talent, or memory. Your youngster could share the stuffed animal he got for his birthday or read a poem he wrote, for example.

The definition of me

How kids see themselves plays a big role in their self-esteem. Ask your youngster to write a dictionary-style definition of herself that includes things she's proud of. ("Ellie: a 9-year-old girl who is friendly, loves to read, and has a good sense of humor.") *Idea:* Suggest that she write positive definitions for other family members.

Current events

While it's important to become informed about current events, the news can be upsetting for children. Turn it off when you're not watching. If you'd like to let your youngster see the news, record it and watch together. That way, you can pause to discuss events, which will help him put them in context.

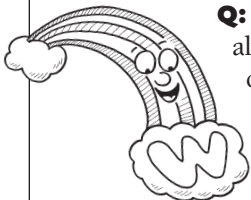
Worth quoting

"Happiness is a perfume you cannot pour on others without getting a few drops on yourself." *Ralph Waldo Emerson*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What will you always find at the end of a rainbow?

A: The letter W.



Get your child to listen—the first time

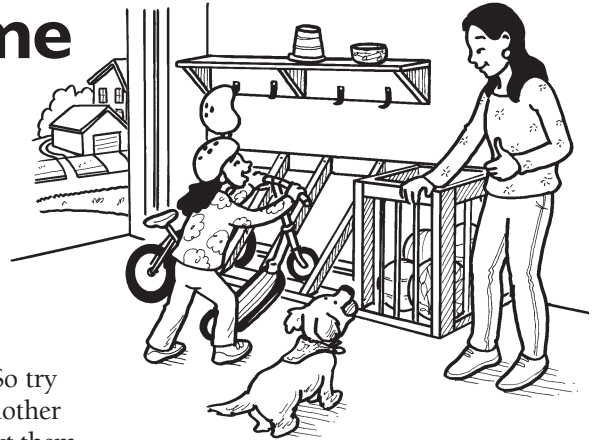
What you say and how you say it can make a world of difference when you need your child to listen. Consider these tips to curb nagging and encourage better listening.

Get close

Your youngster is more apt to listen when you're face-to-face. So try not to shout instructions from another room or across the yard—or to text them to her. It's also a good idea to get her attention before you start talking ("Hey, there's something you need to do ..."). Then, have her repeat your instructions ("I'm supposed to put my scooter in the garage") so you know she has heard and understood you.

Slow down

Too many instructions at once can overwhelm your child. Instead of rattling off a bunch of tasks (put away your laundry, do your homework, take out the trash), give her one at a time. Or



suggest that she write them down and check off each one as she completes it. She can come back and proudly show you her finished list.

Give options

Say your youngster often procrastinates when you tell her to get dressed in the morning. Instead of nagging, you could ask, "Are you going to wear sweatpants or jeans today?" Or if you find yourself repeatedly telling her to eat her vegetables, you might try, "Do you want carrots or broccoli?" Giving her a say will make her more apt to listen and respond.♥

A world of nonfiction

It's exciting to read about real people and places! Ask these questions to help your youngster pick out nonfiction books he'll want to read.

"Who would you like to meet?" Your child might read biographies of people who intrigue him, like his favorite baseball player or an explorer he learned about in history class. How does "getting to know" these people influence his opinion of them?

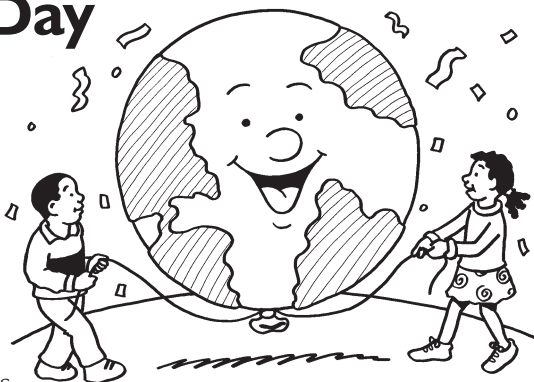
"Where do you want to go?" Nonfiction can transport your youngster anywhere in the universe—and even back in time. Maybe he'll read about a tropical rain forest, the International Space Station, or medieval times. Encourage him to imagine himself in the place or time he reads about.♥



Celebrate Earth Day

Show the Earth some love on April 22—and every day. Here are activities that will help the planet *and* boost your child's math and research skills.

Calculate and conserve. A typical showerhead sprays out 5 gallons of water per minute. Have your youngster time his next shower and multiply the number of minutes by 5. If his shower took 8 minutes, he used 40 gallons of water ($8 \times 5 = 40$). Encourage family members



to time their showers, too. Then, ask everyone to trim 2 minutes off their showers, and let your child calculate how much water your family saved.

Try plant-based foods. Eating less meat is an eco-friendly habit that's also healthy for your youngster. Ask him to research plant-based alternatives to some of the meat-based foods your family eats. He might find recipes for black bean burgers, shiitake mushroom "bacon," and eggplant "steaks." Make and try them together. *Idea:* Consider committing to one meatless day per week. Your child can choose the recipe—or come up with his own.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER DIY stickers

What makes stickers ... well ... sticky? Your youngster can find out with this art project.

1. Draw stickers. Let her make lines to divide a sheet of white paper into 12 equal boxes. Encourage her to use colored pencils to draw a picture (taco, star, heart) in each box.

2. Make glue. In a bowl, have your child stir together 1 tbsp. cold water and 1 packet unflavored gelatin. Meanwhile, boil 3 tbsp. water. Pour it into the gelatin. Now she can add $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. sugar and stir until dissolved. She made glue! Help her use a paintbrush to coat the back of her paper with the glue.



3. Stick. When the glue dries, she can cut out her stickers along the lines. To use, she should moisten the backs with a damp sponge. Then, she could stick them on papers, binders, notebooks, and more.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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End-of-year volunteer

As the school year winds down, consider these ideas for helping your child's teachers.

• **Assist with projects.**

Offer to bind student-made books or frame children's artwork. You might also put together a slide show of photos the teacher took during the year.

• **Participate in special events.**

Ask the teacher how you can lend a hand during in-person or virtual events, such as end-of-year parties, awards ceremonies, or graduation.

• **Drop off boxes.**

Find out if teachers need boxes to pack up their books and supplies. You could call grocery stores and dollar stores to see which ones donate boxes, then volunteer to pick them up and drop them off at the school.♥



Q & A Promote hopefulness

Q: *I don't want the negative events of the past year to keep my son from being hopeful. What can I do?*

A: Hope is contagious! Encourage your son to "catch" it from you. Share your plans for future good things. For instance, you might talk about fun things you hope to do this summer, like go camping or watch a fireworks display. Ask your son what he hopes for, too.

Taking action is another way for your

son to feel more hopeful. Whenever possible, let him do things to make a difference. For example, if he's worried about people needing food, the two of you might grow vegetables to donate to a food pantry.

Remember, you know your child best. If your son talks about feeling hopeless, or you are concerned that he might be suffering from depression, talk to his school counselor or doctor.♥

