

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

November 2004



#### SHORT NOTES

##### After-school learning

You can improve your child's skills while building on his interests. How? Many community centers and libraries offer computer classes, book clubs, or hands-on science groups. They're also great ways for your youngster to meet other kids with common interests.

##### Backward proof

When your child is proofreading, suggest she read her work backward. Have her start with the last sentence and work her way back to the first. It'll be easier for her to spot spelling and grammar mistakes when she looks at sentences out of their usual order.

##### Get out!

Need a break? Try spending time outdoors with your youngster. A walk, a visit to the park, or even an overnight camping trip can help you and your child relax and escape from daily stress.

##### Worth quoting

"If you can dream it, you can do it."  
Walt Disney

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Teacher:** Why did the Pilgrims sail to America?

**Student:** Maybe they missed the plane?



## Be a volunteer

*How every parent can help*

When does a good school become a great school? When parents get involved! Studies show that when parents volunteer, their children are more successful.

Think you're too busy to pitch in? Not sure what you can do? Here are ways you can be a part of your child's school—either a little or a lot, depending on your schedule.



**Review** your child's homework each night. Your interest will motivate your youngster and help you keep track of what she's learning in school.

**Have** lunch with your youngster. Just being at the school lets your child know you care.

**Attend** parent-teacher meetings whenever possible. You will learn about your youngster's progress and get to know his teacher.

**Create** a parent network—for example, a phone tree for your child's class or grade. *Bonus:* This is a great way to meet other parents.

**Offer** to beautify school grounds. You and your child can both pitch in on weekends to pick up trash, clean playground equipment, plant flowers, spread grass seed, or do other tasks.

**Chaperone** a field trip. You'll be helping the teacher and get to spend extra time with your child.

**Ask** your youngster's teacher if there's classroom-related work you can do at home, like preparation for special activities. ♥

#### Volunteer tips

When you offer your time to your child's school, keep these tips in mind:

- Check your school's policy on volunteers. Do you need a visitor's tag? Do you have to fill in paperwork or submit to a background check? Are you allowed to volunteer in your own child's classroom?
- Call first. Tell the teacher when you can be there. Ask what's the best time of day to help out.
- Mention your talents. Could you read aloud? Are you a whiz at filing and photocopying?
- Don't share confidential information. Personal information about students or teachers should stay in the classroom. ♥



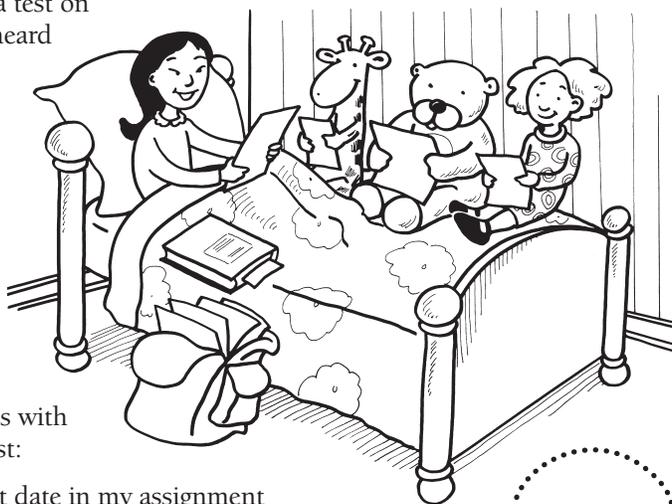
# Test-taking checklist

“Remember, there’s a test on Friday.” When Joanne heard these words, she felt nervous. She often had trouble with tests, even when she studied hard.

Kim, her classmate, wasn’t worried. She usually did well on tests—and her grades showed it. The difference? Kim has learned test-taking skills.

If your child struggles with tests, share this checklist:

I wrote down the test date in my assignment book and on my calendar at home.



- I listened carefully when the teacher reviewed in class, and I knew what material would be covered on the test.
- I started studying a little each night (15–20 minutes) a week before the test.
- I reread the textbook and answered the questions at the end of each chapter. I also went over class notes, teacher handouts, and old homework and tests.
- I made up mock test questions and answers for practice. Then, I studied with a friend, and we quizzed each other.
- I got a good night’s sleep before test day.
- I felt prepared and confident that I would do my best. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER Double trouble

Challenge your child with this brainteaser: “Which would you rather have—one dollar every day for 11 days, or one penny, doubled every day for 11 days?” After your youngster chooses, give her paper and pencil and ask her to figure out which is more.



If she chooses the dollar, she’ll easily come up with \$11.00. If she chooses the penny, the math will be more difficult. On day one, she’ll have 1 cent. On day two, she gets 2 cents (1 cent doubled). Two cents added to 1 cent gives her 3 cents. (Remind her that, on each day, she doubles the number of pennies she receives and adds that amount to the previous day’s total.) At the end of 11 days, she will have \$20.47! ♥

## PARENT TO PARENT Active time = screen time

My kids have never watched a lot of television. The computer, on the other hand, has become their reason for living! When we upgraded our system last year, the boys started spending all their free time on it. I was glad they were picking up computer skills, but I wanted them to stay physically active, too.

A friend suggested something she used with her kids—an activity point system. I decided to give it a try. I assigned “minute points” to my sons’ favorite physical activities, from biking to playing hacky-sack. They earn “screen time” by being active. For example, they earn 30 minutes of computer time for every 30 minutes they spend riding their bikes. They love the reward, and I know they’re getting plenty of exercise! ♥



## Q & A You can do it!

**Q:** My friends’ kids seem ready and able to do anything. How can I help my children develop more confidence?

**A:** Build a can-do attitude in your youngsters by expecting that they can do things. Kids can do more than you think! Doing everything for them sends the message that they’re helpless. Asking them to pitch in shows you believe in their abilities.

When your children try a task, like helping with laundry, resist the urge to take over at the first sign of trouble. Instead, show them how to do it themselves. Then, let them try it on their own, with your guidance.

If your youngsters are unsure about how to do something, encourage them to figure it out by asking, “What do you think should be the next step?” They’ll realize they can think through problems by themselves. ♥



**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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