

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION[®]

February 2017



SHORT NOTES

On time every day

Arriving at school on time allows your child to settle in and take full advantage of every learning activity. Let him take the lead on this important responsibility by teaching him to set an alarm. *Tip:* Suggest that he place the clock across the room so he has to get out of bed to switch it off.

A “mind rehearsal”

Have your youngster “practice” challenging situations in her mind to boost her confidence. Before a cheer-leading competition, for example, she could picture herself nailing her routines. Or if a big test is coming up, she might imagine staying calm and answering questions to the best of her ability.

Field trip learning

When you sign a field trip permission slip, show interest—you’ll inspire your child to learn more from his outing. Ask him to predict what he will see and learn. Together, look up the destination online or in books, and say something like, “I can’t wait to hear which instrument is your favorite at the symphony.” Then, follow up with him afterward.

Worth quoting

“Life’s most persistent and urgent question is, ‘What are you doing for others?’” *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

JUST FOR FUN

Q: Why can’t you tell a joke while standing on ice?

A: Because it might crack up.



Great graphic organizers

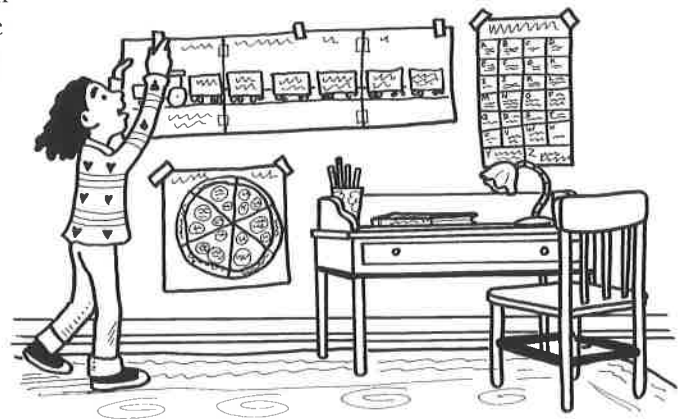
Organizing information in creative ways can make studying more interesting and productive for your youngster. Encourage her to try these graphic organizers—and to invent some of her own!

Cars in a train

Drawing a train is one way to understand and study steps in a process or events in a sequence, such as the parts of the scientific method or the plot of a novel. Suggest that your child label each train car with a step (“Ask a question,” “Make a hypothesis”) and add a picture to illustrate it.

Toppings on a pizza

Have your youngster draw a pizza to visualize facts. On each slice, she should write a category of information (*example:* “Lewis and Clark,” “Cartier,” and so on for a quiz on explorers). She can draw toppings (pepperoni, mushrooms) and put a fact on each one. On the Lewis and



Clark “pepperoni,” she might write, “Started in St. Louis” and “Ended at the Pacific Ocean.”

Letters of the alphabet

Let your child divide a sheet of paper into 26 squares and label them A–Z. Then, she could write a fact that begins with each letter. If her topic is habitats, she can define *desert* in the D square and *rain forest* for R. Being creative with less-common letters will get her thinking more deeply about the material (“Quick temperature drops happen at night in the desert” for Q).♥

Respect all around

Every day, there are plenty of opportunities for your child to show respect for others. Here are examples.

● **At home...** The dinner table is a great place to start. Teach your youngster to thank the cook. He’ll show respect for the person’s time and care in preparing the food.

● **In school...** Encourage him to be respectful of other children’s backgrounds by learning greetings in the languages they speak at home.

● **In your community...** Explain that shoppers respect store employees by not creating extra work for them. If you decide you don’t need an item in your cart, help your child return it to where it belongs. After you load groceries into your car, have him walk with you to return the cart.♥



Keep screen time in check

Do you worry that your child spends too much time in front of a screen? Do you wonder how he could best use technology? Consider this advice for helping him to balance screen time with other activities and to make the most of the time he does spend on electronics.

Aim for a mix. Together, look for ways to balance screen time with schoolwork, active play, and



family time. Make rules about where and when your youngster uses a computer, tablet, smartphone, or video game (say, in the living room after homework is finished). Have him set a timer while he uses a device—when it goes off, it's time to go out and play or help you prepare dinner, for example.

Use technology as a tool. Encourage your child to regard a device as a tool to use for specific purposes. He might download an astronomy app to help spot constellations in the night sky or a birding app to identify bird calls during a hike. He'll learn to rely on technology for real-life purposes.♥

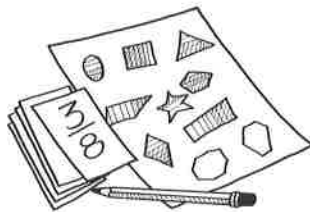
ACTIVITY CORNER

Fraction art



Your youngster can practice identifying and representing fractions by creating this colorful mosaic with you—fraction by fraction.

Materials:
pencil, paper,
index cards,
crayons



1. Let your child draw 10 geometric shapes on a sheet of paper, such as circles, squares, rectangles, triangles, trapezoids, and pentagons.
2. On separate index cards, have her write any 12 fractions (examples: $\frac{1}{2}$, $\frac{1}{3}$, $\frac{1}{4}$, $\frac{2}{8}$, $\frac{3}{8}$). Shuffle the cards, and stack them facedown.
3. Take turns flipping over a card (say, $\frac{3}{8}$). Pick a shape, and color in that fraction on the shape (draw lines to divide it into 8 equal parts, and color 3 parts).
4. When you've used all the cards, shuffle and keep going. Continue until you've filled as many shapes as possible.

Note: If you get a fraction that isn't available to color, turn over cards until you select one you can use.♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Overcoming shyness

My daughter Gabrielle has always been shy and quiet around people she doesn't know well. This year, her teacher told me she was worried because Gabrielle rarely speaks in class.

We met with the school counselor, who had some good advice. For example, I'm trying to let Gabrielle speak for herself rather than jumping in to "rescue" her. When someone asks her

name, I smile at her and wait instead of saying it for her. I'm also encouraging her to order her food in restaurants and to speak up at places like the hair salon and the dentist's office.

The counselor helped Gabrielle set a goal of raising her hand to answer a question at least once a day. We're having fun practicing by playing school at home—and her teacher just sent home a note saying she's seeing a little progress!♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Math+Science Connection

Intermediate Edition

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

February 2017

Clinch County Elementary/Middle School
Lori Register, Parent Involvement Coordinator



INFO BITS

Show your work

When your child shows his work on math problems, his teacher can see what he does and does not understand. To encourage this habit, have him choose a homework problem for each of you to solve separately. Be sure to write or draw the steps you use. It will be interesting to compare your answers, see each other's work, and talk about how you solved the problem.

Dis-assembly line

Let your youngster take apart a broken toy, radio, or vacuum cleaner. As she explores the pieces, ask questions like "How do the different parts work together?" or "What parts move other parts?" You'll invite her to think like an engineer. She could try to put the item back together or use the pieces to invent something else.



Web picks

At hoodamath.com/games/shapefold.html, your child will use logic to fit together colorful shapes.

What do chocolate and parachutes have to do with science? Your youngster can find out with the experiments at sciencekids.co.nz/experiments.html.

Just for fun

Q: What should you do if you're scared?

A: Open a math book—there's safety in numbers!



Math meets geography

Locations and distances are part of geography, but they're all about numbers, too. Encourage your child to navigate math with these activities.

Drive the distance

In the car for errands? Let your youngster use the odometer to compare large numbers. She can write down the odometer reading at the start of the trip and at every stop. Then, have her cut the numbers into separate strips, shuffle them, and compare any two side by side. Her job is to figure out which number is greater than the other. Ask her to pick two more numbers and say which one is less than the other one.



Mount Rainier (29,029 – 14,410 = 14,619 feet, or 8,848 – 4,392 = 4,456 meters).

Map your travels

Charting a course? Your youngster could plot the way. Have her draw a 10 x 10 grid. She should write 1–10 up the left side and A–J across the bottom. Now, she marks the pretend places she'll visit, perhaps a library, a school, and a park. To reach her destination, she can move a finger across her grid and then up until she hits the spot—and announce the map coordinates. *Example:* "The library is at J, 5." 📦

Flipping over the moon

Making this "flip book" will help your youngster learn about the phases of the moon.

Sketch. On separate sheets of a pad of sticky notes, have him draw 30 circles, each one the same size and in the same spot.

Observe. Every night for a month, let your child gaze into the night sky to observe the moon's shape. Then, he should shade each circle to match what he sees and label it (*full moon, crescent moon*). *Note:* If the moon isn't visible, he might draw what he thinks it would be.

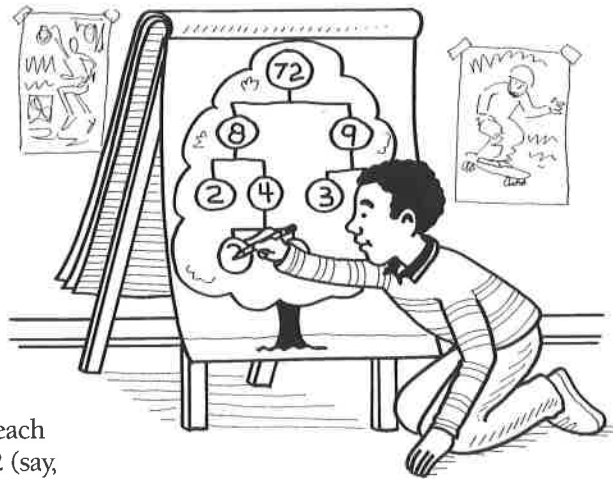
Flip. After a month, his flip book will be complete. He can "see" the phases change by flipping quickly through his notepad. It will resemble a cartoon moving through all the phases of the moon! 📦



Factor in fun

Breaking a number into its factors—numbers that multiply together to equal it—helps your child master multiplication. Suggest that he try these factor-related ideas.

● **Grow a factor tree.** Have your youngster make “family trees” for various numbers. For example, he might write and circle the number 72 at the top of a piece of paper. Underneath, he could draw two more circles, each attached by a line to 72, with factors of 72 (say,



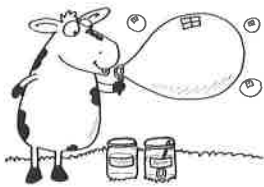
8 and 9 because $8 \times 9 = 72$). Then, he would draw circles under each to add factors for those numbers (4 and 2 for the 8, and 3 and 3 for the 9). He continues adding circles and numbers until he has just *prime numbers*, or numbers that divide evenly only by 1 and themselves (2 and 3 are prime, so he'd just need to draw circles under the 4 for 2 and 2). Then his “72 tree” is complete!

● **What’s my partner?** Let your child choose a number and one of its factors. He can pose a question for you like: “I pick 24 and the factor 8. What’s my partner?” Answer: 3, since $8 \times 3 = 24$. Then it’s your turn to give him numbers—and his turn to find the factor partner. 📦

SCIENCE LAB Blowing bubbles

How can your youngster create bigger, longer-lasting bubbles? This experiment will show her.

You’ll need: water, measuring cup, liquid dish detergent, measuring spoon, glycerin, 2 glass jars, pencil, paper, 2 pipe cleaners, timer



Here’s how: Have your child measure 1 cup water and 2 tbsp. detergent into each jar. She should add 1 tbsp. glycerin to one jar and label the jars (“glycerin,” “no glycerin”). To make a wand for each solution, she can bend one end of each pipe cleaner into a circle. Let her blow bubbles from each solution, sketch the size of each one, and record how long it lasts before popping.

What happens? The bubbles with glycerin last longer.

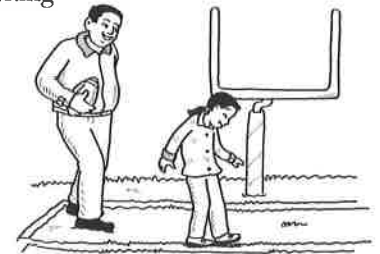
Why? Bubbles pop when the water in them evaporates. Soap slows down evaporation by forming a thin film around the water. Glycerin makes this film thicker as its molecules “stick” to the water molecules. 📦

PARENT TO PARENT

Solve perimeter problems

My daughter Corinne is working on finding perimeters in math, and her teacher sent home ways to practice.

First, Corinne measured a few books by lining up blocks around their borders—remembering to use blocks that were all the same size. She counted the blocks on each side and added the four numbers together to find the perimeter of each book. Her favorite book had a perimeter of $8 + 6 + 8 + 6$, or 28 blocks.



Next, we walked to the high school football field. There were lots of opportunities to measure perimeter there! She took steps to measure each side of the end zone and found the perimeter by adding the four numbers together. Then, she used a tape measure to determine the perimeter of a team bench. The hands-on (and feet-on!) practice is helping Corinne feel more confident about her upcoming quiz on perimeters. 📦

MATH CORNER

Create riddles with coins

Question: “I have 4 coins that total 60 cents. I do not have any dimes or pennies. What are the coins?”

Answer: 2 quarters and 2 nickels.

Use riddles like these to have fun playing with the values of coins.

To start, gather about 20 coins (quarters, dimes, nickels, pennies). Secretly choose a few, and make up a riddle. Your child can think through the answer in his

head or move around coins to work it out. Then, he gets to make up a riddle for you.

Remind your youngster that a coin riddle may have more than one solution. For example, if you say, “My coins total 55 cents, but I don’t have any nickels,” he might find several answers, like 2 quarters and 5 pennies, or 4 dimes and 15 pennies. 📦



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Reading Connection

Tips for Reading Success

Beginning Edition

February 2017

Clinch County Elementary/Middle School
Lori Register, Parent Involvement Coordinator

Book Picks

Read-aloud favorites

■ *Kitten's First Full Moon*

(Kevin Henkes)

Is that a bowl of milk in the sky? An adorable kitten sees the full moon for the first time and tries her hardest to drink from the "bowl." But no matter what, it never seems to get closer. After a night of mishaps, she returns home to a surprise on her porch. (Also available in Spanish.)



■ *Mama Panya's Pancakes: A Village Tale from Kenya*

(Mary and Rich Chamberlin)

In this story about sharing, Adika and his mother go to the market where Mama Panya makes pancakes. Even though she doesn't have much money, she cooks enough to feed everyone in the village. Includes facts about Kenya, greetings in Kiswahili, and, of course, a pancake recipe!



■ *Her Idea* (Rilla Alexander)

A little girl named Sozi has a big imagination and is always dreaming up ideas. Like many kids, she figures she'll do something with them later. Then an unlikely helper gives Sozi the perfect place to save her ideas—and the motivation to follow through.

■ *I See a Pattern Here*

(Bruce Goldstone)

Patterns are everywhere—in nature, on buildings, and on your youngster's clothing. This nonfiction book will encourage your child to look for patterns, figure out what comes next in the patterns pictured, and even create his own.



Build empathy with stories

Some of the same strategies that boost your child's reading comprehension can also help her develop empathy. These activities let her practice recognizing and thinking about feelings as she explores books.

"I know how she feels..."

When you read to your youngster, have her look for clues that hint at emotions. If a story says, "A tear rolled down her cheek," your child might say that the character is sad. Identifying characters' feelings will help her understand people's emotions in real life, too.

"If I were that character..."

Encourage your youngster to put herself in a character's shoes. What would she do differently, and how would that change her feelings—and the story? For example, in *Harold and the Purple Crayon* (Crockett Johnson), the little boy felt scared after he drew a dragon to guard his apple tree. Your child may say she'd draw a friendly dragon and feel



happy—but her dragon wouldn't make a very good guard!

"This reminds me of..."

Help your youngster make connections between storybook characters and real people. This can deepen her understanding of the story and build empathy. Perhaps a character who moved to a different town makes her think of the new kid in her class. How did the character feel, and how does she think her classmate feels? (She might answer, "Scared," "Nervous," or "Excited.")♥

Make your own books

Your youngster will feel like a real writer when he creates a homemade book. Try this plan.

Draft. Help your child write a rough draft. A fun title for a little author is "All About Me." He could write about his family, friends, school, and favorite things.

Publish. Cut sheets of white construction paper in half. On each page, your youngster can copy one sentence from his draft and illustrate it. When he's finished, staple the pages together.

Share. Hold a "Meet the Author" night. Your child gets to read his book aloud to your family and answer questions about it.♥



Great reasons to visit the library

Making the public library a regular family hangout spot has a lot of benefits. Consider these points.

It's a nice place to read. Your child will never run out of books. Plus, there may be plenty of cozy reading spots like beanbag chairs and quiet corners. Let him pick a few stories, and choose a place where you can read—and enjoy time together.



There are fun activities. Ask about special reading-related events, and plan to attend some as a family. You might make a craft after listening to a story, watch a puppet show based on a favorite book, explore ABC books and do alphabet activities, or even read with dogs.

Reading opportunities are endless. Your youngster may decide to read every book by a particular author or all the books in a series. He could check one out each time you visit the library. Or perhaps he'll pick a topic he'd like to learn about. Let him check out nonfiction books to become an "expert" on his choice, whether it's polar animals or hockey.♥

Fun with Words

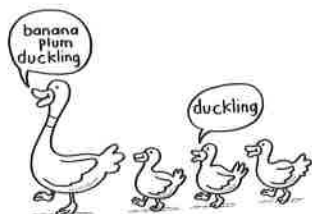


Odd word out

Build your child's vocabulary and thinking skills with this simple game that you can play at home or on the go.

1. Ask your youngster to listen carefully while you say three words—two that go together and one that doesn't "belong."

2. Have her tell you which is the odd word out. For instance, if you chose



banana, plum, and duckling, she would probably say *duckling*, because the other two are fruits.

3. If she picks a word you didn't expect, that's okay! Let her make a case for it, and she'll stretch her thinking. Maybe she'll say *plum*, because bananas and ducklings are both yellow.

4. Now it's her turn to say three words, and you decide which doesn't belong.♥

Parent to Parent

A household joke station

My son Leo has been on a joke kick lately. It seems like every day he tells us a new joke he heard or made up. Because he's learning to read, we decided to create a household "joke station" where he could read jokes whenever he wants.

We got a few joke books and put them in a basket in the family room. Soon afterward, when I read Leo a funny joke I found online, he asked if I would print it out and put it in the basket. And now when he tells me a joke, I help him write it down, and he adds it to the station.



Our family joke station has become a favorite household spot. If we're feeling silly or someone needs to be cheered up, we visit the station and take turns reading jokes aloud. Leo's reading skills are improving—and there's more laughter in our home!♥

Q&A Writing backward?

Q My first-grader sometimes writes letters or words backward. They look just like mirror images! Could she have a learning disability?

A When children are first learning to write, they occasionally write backward. Most kids outgrow this. But if you notice your daughter doing it more often, talk to her teacher.

Find out whether the teacher has any concerns. Is your child performing below grade level? Does she have a hard time spelling new words? Are her skills uneven (she reads well but struggles with

writing, for instance)? If you suspect a problem, or the teacher does, ask about the possibility of testing your daughter to see if she needs extra help.

In the meantime, you could work with her on writing correctly at home. Remind her that we write the way we read—from left to right. Whenever you see her writing backward, ask, "Do you notice anything unusual about those letters?" Then, help her correct them.♥



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