

# Home & School

## Working Together for School Success

### CONNECTION®

February 2021



#### SHORT NOTES

##### "How-to" writing

Here's a fun way for your child to practice writing explanations. Ask him to list step-by-step instructions for creating something out of play dough—without telling you what the object is. Follow his directions exactly as written. Is your object the one he intended?

##### Apologies in action

When your youngster needs to apologize, explain that taking responsibility for her actions means more than just saying "I'm sorry." For instance, if she loses pieces to her brother's board game, she might use her own money to replace the game or offer to make homemade game pieces.

##### DID YOU KNOW?

People blink less than usual while staring at a computer screen. And that can lead to dry eyes and eyestrain. Encourage your child to take "blink breaks" when he's online. He might look away from the screen and blink several times while he waits for a program to open, for example.

##### Worth quoting

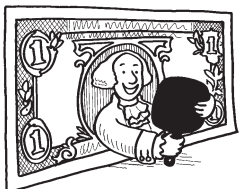
"A single act of kindness throws out roots in all directions, and the roots spring up and make new trees."

Amelia Earhart

#### JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** What's the easiest way to double a dollar?

**A:** Put it in front of a mirror.



LeRoy-Ostrander ISD 499

Ms. Jill Soltau, Title I Director

## The nitty-gritty on grit

Children who have grit are able to overcome setbacks and stick with challenges. Nurture your youngster's persistence with these ideas.

##### Be independent

Let your child do as much as possible for herself. Maybe her smoothie is lumpy or the gift she wraps is messy, but resist the urge to fix them. You'll show her that you believe in her—and that will help her believe in herself.

##### Find "lightbulb" moments

A comic-strip artist might draw a lightbulb to show that a character has a "bright" idea. When your youngster struggles to learn something (say, how to juggle), suggest that she draw a lightbulb and fill it with steps to success. *Examples:* "Learn to juggle scarves first." "Juggle one ball at a time."

##### Declare a "do-over"

Remind your child that a setback simply means she needs more practice. For instance, if she's showing you how she can do a cartwheel but doesn't land on



her feet, declare a "do-over." She'll learn that it's okay to try again and again.

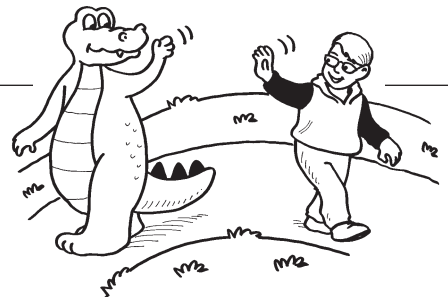
##### Use self-motivation

Kids tend to stick with things they're interested in, and that teaches them the rewards of perseverance. Steer your youngster toward projects that fit her passions. If she wants to design video games someday, you might help her find a coding class or an online tutorial. ♥

## Attention, please!

These kid-friendly activities can stretch your child's attention span:

- Play "Spot the Difference." Draw two nearly identical pictures. Perhaps you'll sketch two pizzas with a pepperoni in a different spot or a different number of mushrooms. Tell your youngster how many differences there are. Can he find them all?
- "See you later, alligator." "After 'while, crocodile." With your child, take turns thinking of ways to say "goodbye"—each should rhyme and mention an animal. *Examples:* "Gotta go, armadillo." "In a few, kangaroo." How long can your youngster stay focused as you go back and forth? ♥



## Big project, big success

School projects give your child a chance to be creative as he shows what he has learned. Share these tips for successful projects from start to finish.

**Make a connection.** Your youngster will learn more—and be more motivated to work hard—if he picks a topic he cares about. Say he's asked to write a report on pioneer days. He might focus on daily life as a pioneer kid or on popular games from that time.

**Break it down.** Suggest that your child think of a big project as a series of smaller



assignments. He can set a deadline for each step, including researching, writing, and revising. Remind him to leave some wiggle room in case a task takes longer than he anticipated.

**Add flair.** How could your youngster make his project stand out? Encourage him to include extras like models, posters, or audio or video clips. Maybe he'll make a cardboard model of a one-room schoolhouse like those many pioneer children attended. If his project includes a class presentation, he could demonstrate a game from the time period like jackstraws (similar to pickup sticks).♥

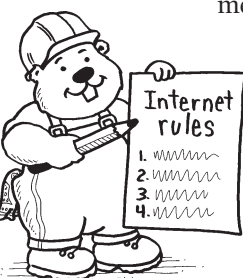
## PARENT TO PARENT

### Online safety 101

My daughter Peyton does many things online these days—from going to school to hanging out with her friends. I was worried about her safety, so I found an online cyber safety course at [sos.fbi.gov/en/](https://sos.fbi.gov/en/), and we took it together.

We were both surprised by what we learned. For instance, online contests can be used to collect names and email addresses. And who knew that social

media quizzes can trick you into sharing your birth month or pet's name to help hackers figure out your passwords?



After our class, Peyton made an illustrated list of rules to keep by the computer. Her rules include blocking sites that aren't kid friendly, not sharing passwords with friends, and asking my permission before downloading anything. Now, both of us are more careful when we work and play online.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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## Handling cheating

**Q:** My son got caught giving his friend answers during a test and received a zero. How should I handle this at home?

**A:** Start by asking your child why he cheated. If he says he just wanted to help his friend, explain that cheating is always wrong—regardless of the reason. Also, it doesn't actually help anyone. Your son got a zero on his test, and his friend didn't learn that studying is the right way to earn a good grade.

Or if your youngster felt pressured to share the answer, help him plan what to do the next time someone asks him to cheat. He might simply say, "Sorry, I can't," and keep his eyes on his own paper. Later, he could suggest they study together for the next test.

Finally, let your child know what the consequences will be at home if he cheats again (say, losing electronics for a certain period of time).♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Math squares: A brain workout

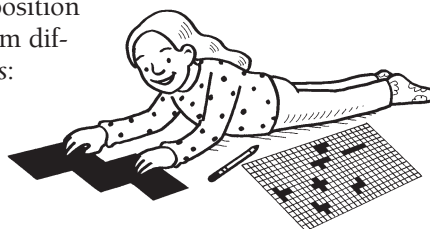
Boost your youngster's spatial reasoning—an important part of success in geometry—with this fun brainteaser.

**1.** Have your child cut out five squares, all the same size, from construction paper.

**2.** Now she can position the squares to form different *pentominoes*: arrangements of five squares in which each square shares

at least one side with another square. Can she find all 12 possible pentominoes? (If she gets stuck, help her search online for "pentominoes.")

**3.** After your youngster makes each pentomino, she can draw it on graph paper so she remembers which ones she has found.



**Challenge:** Ask your child to cut out the pentominoes she drew on graph paper. Now she can arrange all 12 into a big square with a square hole in the middle.♥

# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2021

## READING Book previewer

Help your youngster choose library books she'll love with this idea.

**Ingredients:** paper, books, pencil

Have your child put a blank strip of paper in each book that looks interesting. One by one, she can read the description on the inside jacket or back cover, leaf through any pictures, scan the table of contents (if there is one), and read the first few pages.

After previewing a book, your youngster could mark the paper with ☺, ☹, or ⊕ and add notes. *Examples:* "The character is my age," "Realistic photos of horses," "Loved this author's last book." Then she can choose the best books to check out.

*Variation:* To preview e-books, help your child read samples online and type her comments in a file.

## FITNESS

How many different body parts can you and your child use to keep a balloon from hitting the ground? Toss a balloon, and take turns bumping it with elbows, knees, feet, or other body parts. If it hits the floor or you use the same body part twice in a row, you're out!

## CULTURES

On February 12, celebrate Chinese New Year with your youngster by searching online for traditional greetings in Mandarin. He might learn to say "gong xi fa cai" (*gong she fa tsai*), which means "Wishing you great happiness and prosperity." And "xin nian hao" (*shin nee-an how*) translates to "Happy Chinese New Year."

## MATH You've got mail!

On which days of the week do you tend to get more mail? Your child can make a *line graph* to find out.

**Ingredients:** paper, colored pencils, mail

Up the left side of a sheet of paper, your youngster should draw a line with tick marks (0–10). Across the bottom, he could draw a line labeled with the days mail comes (Monday–Saturday). Each week, let him choose a different-color pencil to plot data. He can count the mail each day, mark a dot where that day and the number of pieces intersect (say, Tuesday and 3), and connect the dots. Have him include a key that tells which color pencil he used for week 1, week 2, and so on. After a few weeks, ask what trends he notices. ("We usually get the most mail on Mondays!")

## Refrigerator Poster

Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."

## HISTORY Explore inventions

What would your youngster's life be like without modern conveniences? Inspire her to peek into history with this activity.

**Ingredients:** pencil, paper, books or internet access

For one day, have your child make a list of inventions she uses. She'll need to monitor how she gets things done. For instance, she might heat up food in a microwave, talk to her grandmother on a cell phone, and turn on a lamp to do homework.

To see how inventions have evolved, your youngster can look up older versions of those inventions in books or online. She could make an illustrated history of an invention by drawing all the versions (*example:* candlestick phone, rotary phone, touch-tone phone, cordless phone, flip phone, smartphone).

# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

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## Character Corner

### WRITING

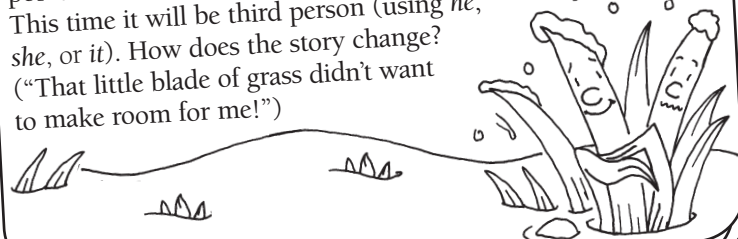
#### Tinker with point of view

What is life like for a blade of grass? A sidewalk? This creative writing activity helps your child pay attention to point of view, or who is telling a story.

**Ingredients:** paper, pencil

Ask your youngster to pick an object and write its “autobiography” from the first-person point of view (using *I*). For a blade of grass, he might write, “I first poked through the ground in spring 2020. I was bright green and basking in the sun. Now I’m covered with snow.”

Next, have him write a “biography” from a different point of view—perhaps that of a dandelion. This time it will be third person (using *he*, *she*, or *it*). How does the story change? (“That little blade of grass didn’t want to make room for me!”)



### GRAMMAR

Conjunctions like *and*, *or*, and *but* join shorter sentences together. Have each family member write two short sentences on two separate strips of paper.

Now see how many you can combine using a conjunction. (“It’s cold outside, but peanut butter is sticky!”) Can you create any sentences that make sense?



### SEQUENCING

Have your youngster choose five random household objects and line them up in order based on a “rule” he chooses. Maybe he’ll arrange them from lightest to darkest, from tallest to shortest, or in alphabetical order. Can you figure out his sequencing rule?



### FRACTIONS

Let your child cut construction paper into same-size squares, then draw lines to divide them into halves, thirds, and fourths. Have her label each part with the correct fraction and cut the squares apart. Now she can arrange the parts to make pictures (house, tree) and add the fractions in each to see how much it’s “worth.”



### COURAGE

Encourage your child to take small steps to gradually boost her courage. To practice for a chorus concert, she could sing in front of a parent or pet. Then, she might perform for an audience of several relatives.



### FLEXIBILITY

When things don’t go your youngster’s way, he can ask himself, “What could I do instead?” This will teach him to be flexible. Say his older brother isn’t available to hang out. Maybe he’ll play a card game with you or work on his karate moves instead.



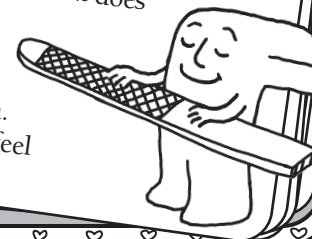
### SELF-MOTIVATION

Suggest that your child look for ways to stay motivated while doing chores. If she doesn’t feel like cleaning her room, perhaps she’ll play “basketball” and toss clothes into the hamper. Or she could see how many items she can pick up in 1 minute.



### SCIENCE

Gather items with different textures and temperatures (examples: nail file, damp napkin). Ask your youngster to close his eyes, and hand him one item at a time. What does his sense of touch tell him about each object? The nail file may be hard and rough. And the napkin might feel cold and soft.



## Congratulations!

We finished \_\_\_\_\_ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)