

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

January 2021

Tom Williams Elementary School



## SHORT NOTES

### Think like a scientist

Does your child understand the difference between an *observation* (what she sees) and an *inference* (what she concludes from the evidence)? Help her by pointing out things you observe and what she can infer. (“There are footprints in the mud, so someone probably walked there after it rained.”)

### Car safety

Keep your youngster safe in the car by making sure his lap belt lies across his upper thighs and the shoulder belt fits across his chest. If his seat belt doesn't fit right, he still needs a booster seat. Most kids “graduate” from a booster when they're 4 feet 9 inches tall, typically between the ages of 8 and 12.

### Dealing with swearing

Youngsters sometimes experiment with curse words to impress friends or express anger. Consider making a “nice language” rule that applies to children *and* adults, since your child will follow your example. And let her know what the consequence will be for swearing.

### Worth quoting

“Reading is important, because if you can read, you can learn anything about everything and everything about anything.” *Tomie dePaola*

## JUST FOR FUN



**Q:** Why do you need a dictionary when you talk to giants?

**A:** They use big words!

## Organized for a new year

It's no surprise that students who are organized tend to do better in school. Could your youngster use some help in this department? Share these strategies for overcoming common pitfalls and starting 2021 off on the right foot.

**Problem:** “I forgot to do my assignment.”

**Solution:** Lists and calendars

Encourage your child to end each day by making a to-do list for tomorrow. He can add to it as he gets new assignments. He'll be less apt to forget anything, and he'll find it satisfying to cross out completed tasks. Also, he could keep a calendar for upcoming tests, presentations, and projects.

**Problem:** “I lost my homework.”

**Solution:** A filing system

Suggest that your youngster keep his backpack nearby while he does homework. After he finishes each assignment, he can put it directly into his backpack. Learning online? Help him create a computer folder for each



subject—each with a subfolder just for homework. Also, have him back up files regularly to a thumb drive or a school-approved cloud app.

**Problem:** “My book is here ... somewhere.”

**Solution:** The five-minute rule

Let your child in on a little secret: The time he spends staying organized will actually save him time in the long run. This is where the five-minute rule comes in. Before he begins working each day, have him set a timer for five minutes and organize supplies, papers, and books until the timer goes off.♥

## What did you learn today?

Expressing interest in school lets your child know her learning is important to you. Consider these tips:

- Ask your youngster to demonstrate something she did in school. She might teach you the steps in long division or a song she sang in music. If she's learning remotely, ask her to show you what apps she uses and how she submits assignments.

- Weave a conversation about school into your evening routine. For example, while you make dinner, invite your youngster to tell you all the cool facts she learned about ancient Egypt during today's history lesson.♥



# Mindfulness for kids

Mindfulness is the practice of slowing down and focusing on the moment as a way to relax. Suggest that your youngster try these strategies to reduce stress.

**Five senses.** Encourage your child to notice something different with each of her five senses. She might *see* snow falling, *hear* the dog snoring, *touch* her cozy sweatshirt, *smell* the fire burning in the fireplace, and *taste* an orange.



**Thought balloons.** Have your youngster sit quietly with her eyes closed. She should focus on breathing in slowly for a count of four and holding her breath for four seconds. Next, she can exhale all the air slowly, pretending she's blowing any worries into a giant balloon. Then, she could imagine the balloon—and her worries—floating away.

**Limp noodles.** Ask your child to lie on the floor and pretend she's an uncooked noodle by stiffening all her muscles. Now have her loosen her toes, feet, ankles, legs, and the rest of her body until she's a completely limp (and relaxed) noodle!♥

## PARENT TO PARENT



## At-home field trips

My son Carson loves school field trips, but he hasn't been able to go on any since the pandemic began. So we've been taking virtual field trips—and they're inspiring real-life learning!

This past fall, we "toured" national parks online to see fall foliage in different parts of the country. Then, we walked around our neighborhood, and Carson sketched the colorful trees he saw.



Another time, we "rode" roller coasters on theme-park websites. This led Carson to experiment with building a roller coaster for his toy cars out of cardboard tubes.

While our virtual trips aren't the same as going to real places, Carson is learning a lot from them, both online and with his projects afterward. And we're having fun exploring the world as a family—from home.

Find more virtual field trip ideas at [rfeonline.com/FieldTrips](http://rfeonline.com/FieldTrips).♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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## ACTIVITY CORNER

### Paper engineering

Why do so many buildings have cylinder-shaped columns? Let your child experiment to find out.

**Materials:** three sheets of construction paper, tape, hardback books

Have your child make three paper columns like this:

1. Roll paper lengthwise into a cylinder, and secure with tape.
2. Fold paper into fourths lengthwise. Unfold, and shape into a rectangular column. Tape the edges together.
3. Fold paper into thirds lengthwise. Tape into a triangular column.

Now it's time to test the columns. Your youngster can stand them up and carefully stack books, one at a time, on top.

**What happens?** The cylinder supports multiple books, while a single book instantly crushes the other two columns. Can your child figure out why? (The cylinder's shape distributes weight evenly. The folds in the rectangular and triangular columns create points of weakness.)♥



## Q & A

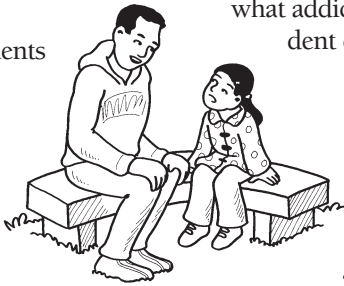
### Talking about drugs

**Q:** My daughter is in third grade. Is it too soon to talk about drugs?

**A:** Actually, children are never too young to start learning about drugs. At this age, your daughter is more likely to be open about her questions and opinions—and to listen to yours.

Watch for teachable moments in everyday life. If her doctor prescribes medicine, you could use the opportunity to talk about why she's not allowed to take medicine that wasn't prescribed for her. If you give

her over-the-counter medicine, ask her to help you carefully read the label and double-check the dosage. Explain that it's dangerous to take more than the recommended amount. Or let a TV commercial about addiction spark a discussion about what addiction means (being dependent on drugs).



**Note:** Stay up to date on the latest information about children and drugs by visiting websites like [drugabuse.gov](http://drugabuse.gov) or [getsmartaboutdrugs.com](http://getsmartaboutdrugs.com).♥