

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

May 2021



Tom Williams Elementary School

SHORT NOTES

Teacher appreciation

This year has been tough for teachers and students alike. Suggest that your youngster end it on a nice note by making a short appreciation video for her teacher. Film your child saying thanks for something specific (“Thank you for teaching us fun word games”) and demonstrating something she learned, like how to make a baking soda-and-vinegar “volcano.”

Time for poetry

Poetry offers short bursts of reading practice and can help your youngster develop a love of language. Check out a few volumes of children’s poetry from the library this summer. Keep the books in the car, on the coffee table, and anywhere else he could pick them up to read a few verses.

Checkup reminder

Now is a good time to schedule your child’s back-to-school checkup—especially if she missed this year’s exam due to the pandemic. Her doctor will do important vision and hearing screenings and catch her up on any vaccinations she needs to stay healthy.

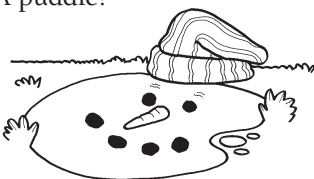
Worth quoting

“Success is not the key to happiness. Happiness is the key to success.”
Albert Schweitzer

JUST FOR FUN

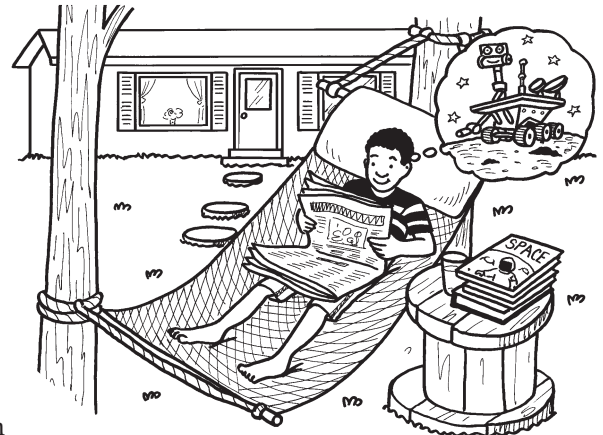
Q: What do you call a snowman in May?

A: A puddle!



Summer brain workouts

Keeping your youngster’s brain active during the summer months helps him remember what he learned in school—and keeps the learning going. That’s especially important this year due to the disruptions caused by COVID-19. Make summertime fun and educational with these strategies.



Follow the news

Give your youngster a reason to read and write all summer by having him follow news about a topic that interests him. If he is fascinated by outer space, he might read articles about Mars exploration and space tourism. If he loves animals, he could find news about babies born at the zoo. He can write weekly “news briefs” to summarize major stories and read them aloud to you.

Play car games

Use time spent in the car to play math games. Call out a target number (say, 11), and race to find a sign with numbers that add up to 11. Your child

might choose a sign for Route 317, because $3 + 1 + 7 = 11$. Or work together to find a pattern of odd and even numbers (65 mph on a speed limit sign, \$108 on a hotel billboard). How long can you keep the pattern going?

Learn together

It’s easier to keep your child learning if you join him. Aim to learn something new together each week, perhaps how to build model cars, play different versions of solitaire or dominos, make your own candles, or write simple computer programs.♥

Family spirit week

Your child has likely celebrated spirit week at school—why not hold a spirit week at home? It will build her sense of family pride and belonging. Try these ideas.

● **Choose a family mascot.** Is your family busy as a bee? Brave as a lion? Have your youngster draw your mascot and write a motto. (“We are the Busy Bees. We get things done!”)

● **Plan special days.** On Baseball Day, each person can wear her favorite team’s colors while everyone plays a friendly backyard ball game. On Heritage Day, eat foods from countries your ancestors are from. *Idea:* Ask other relatives to participate. Swap photos or hold video chats to see each other’s spirit week adventures.♥



Ways to show respect

Respect means caring how your words and actions affect others. Use these tips to guide your child to be respectful of:

Others. Explore the saying, “Treat people how you want to be treated.” Let your youngster draw or list different ways people have treated her respectfully. *Examples:* Her brother asked permission before borrowing her crayons. Her cousin put away his video game to spend time with her. Then, have her look for opportunities to show respect to others.



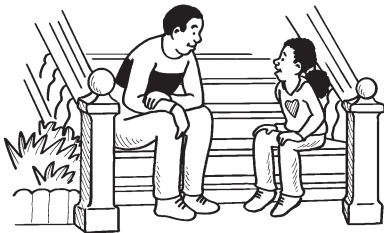
Property. Ask your child to make “care labels” with instructions for taking care of belongings. She might choose a basket to hold library books and make a sticky note label that reads “Handle gently. Return by the due date.”

Authority. Talk with your youngster about why we follow rules and laws (to stay safe and be fair). Then, take turns naming a rule or law and a result of ignoring it. For instance, if everyone ignored the “No talking in class” rule, no one would be able to hear the teacher and learn.♥

Q & A Making decisions

Q: Now that my daughter is older, she gets angry when I try to help her make decisions. How can I guide her and still keep the peace?

A: It’s tempting as a parent to speak up when you think your child is making a poor choice. But experiencing consequences is how kids learn to make better decisions. If your daughter’s choices won’t cause harm, let her make some mistakes.



Rather than volunteering advice, ask questions. If she’s thinking of breaking a promise to a friend, you might ask, “How do you think your friend will feel?”

Finally, if her choice turns out badly, avoid saying, “I told you so.” Instead, help her brainstorm ways to do better in the future. If her friend gets mad at her for breaking her promise, you might say, “What would you do differently next time?”♥



PARENT TO PARENT

My nature center

My son Will looks forward to springtime visits to our local nature center. This year, the indoor exhibits are closed, so I suggested that he create his own nature center at home.

Will loved the idea. He made rubbings of bark from trees, collected flowers and leaves from the ground, and drew pictures of plants and animals he spotted. Together, we checked out field guides from the library to identify his findings. He used what he learned to make an informational “plaque” for each item, just like in the real nature center.

Then Will set up his exhibits in a corner of the family room. He added books about nature as well as a few “wild” stuffed animals, like a squirrel and a cardinal. When he was satisfied with his nature center, he gave our family a tour.

Will continues to add new discoveries—and he’s looking forward to showing relatives and friends around his nature center via video chat.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

Holiday history

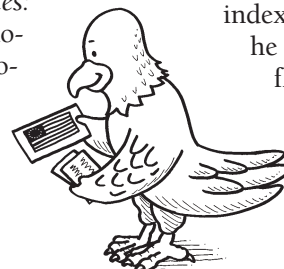
Use summer holidays as a jumping-off point to explore history with your youngster.

Memorial Day

Go online together and learn about national war memorials. *Examples:* the National World War II Memorial, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the National Memorial Arch. Some even have virtual tours. Then invite your child to make models of the memorials using play dough or materials from the recycling bin.

Independence Day

Fun fact: Since 1776, there have been 27 different versions of the U.S. flag. Have your youngster research them in library books. He can draw each flag on the plain side of an index card. On the lined side, he could write the date the flag was introduced and other facts about it. Let him punch holes in the cards and thread them on a piece of yarn to display them in order by date.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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