

# Home & School

Working Together for School Success

## CONNECTION®

December 2003

### SHORT NOTES



#### Teacher for a day

Looking for a way to help your child study tough material? Try this role-playing activity. Have her pretend to be the teacher, and you can be the student. "Teaching" you about the subject is a great way to test her knowledge.

#### Effective choices

One mistake parents often make is giving kids a choice when they don't really have one. ("Do you want to set the table now?") Whenever possible, offer your youngster a real choice. ("Would you like to set the table or make the salad?")

#### Rainy-day box

Ribbons, empty paper towel rolls, wrapping paper scraps, buttons, and boxes... What do these items have in common? They make great craft supplies! Keep a box or basket filled with these recycled items, along with some scissors and glue, to spark creativity and fun.

#### Worth quoting

"Success usually comes to those who are too busy to look for it."

Henry David Thoreau

### JUST FOR FUN

**Child:** Great news. My teacher says we have a test today, come rain or shine.

**Parent:** What's so great about that?

**Child:** It's snowing outside!



## Putting the "care" in character

Teaching children to care about others is one of parents' most important jobs. Here are several activities your family can do to instill this important trait.

#### Notice acts of kindness.

They can come from the real world or the media. *Examples:* A scout troop collects canned goods for a food drive. Students send cards to soldiers overseas. Building awareness can motivate your children to do good deeds.

**Ask for ideas.** Kids often think only big projects make a difference. Let them know small actions often mean the most to others. Together, brainstorm a list of caring actions. *Tip:* Think of one for each letter of the alphabet. Ideas include: Ask the new student to play at recess, Bake cookies for Grandma, and Cook a meal for the family.

**Read books for inspiration.** Consider adding books about caring to family reading time. Begin with *Miss Rumphius* by Barbara Clooney; *Thank You, Mr. Falker* by Patricia Polacco; *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein; and *Stevie* by John Steptoe. They show how kind actions affect both the giver and the receiver.



**Encourage caring behavior.** When your youngsters are kind to others, let them know you noticed. You may even want to keep a list of their deeds. Then, your family could enjoy a "Caught in the Act" celebration and talk about everyone's contributions. ♥

### My hero

Community members. Sports stars. Television characters. Many children have heroes that they admire. Do you know who your youngster looks up to? Here are two tips for talking about role models.



#### • Share your experiences

Let your youngster know who influenced you at his age. For instance, maybe you wanted to be like your third-grade teacher. Talk about the qualities you admired, such as her patience and enthusiasm.

#### • Support her choices

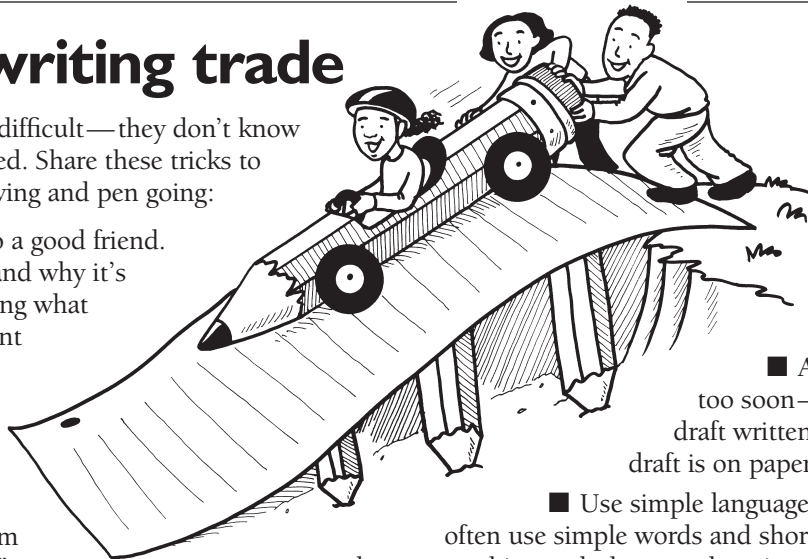
You may not be as excited about your child's choices as she is. But it's important to look for the good in her heroes. For example, if she chooses a singer, you might point out the person's perseverance and talent. ♥

# Tricks of the writing trade

Children often think writing is difficult—they don't know where to begin or how to get started. Share these tricks to get your youngster's creativity flowing and pen going:

■ Pretend you're writing a note to a good friend. Tell that person about your topic and why it's important. Imagine that he's reading what you're writing. What would he want to know?

■ Get something down on paper. After you write even one sentence, the ideas will begin to come more easily. You could start with, "Once upon a time," or, "I am writing about \_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_."



■ Start with the middle or end. The introduction is often the hardest section to write. Go back to the beginning after you've warmed up.

■ Avoid editing yourself too soon—you'll never get a draft written. Wait until the first draft is on paper before you edit it.

■ Use simple language. The best writers often use simple words and short sentences. You don't have to use big vocabulary words to impress your readers. ♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### It's a small world

The products we use every day come from all over the world. Here's a geography activity to show your child where they're made.



**Materials:** household items, U.S. map, world map, slips of paper, pencil, tape

Have your youngster collect products from your home. *Examples:* can of soup, hair spray, shirt, towel, radio, stuffed animal.

Together, look at the tags to see where the items were made. Write the name of each state or country on a slip of paper. Help your child tape the slips to the right spots on the maps.

Whenever you go shopping for new products, encourage your child to check the tags and add labels to the maps. ♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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## PARENT TO PARENT

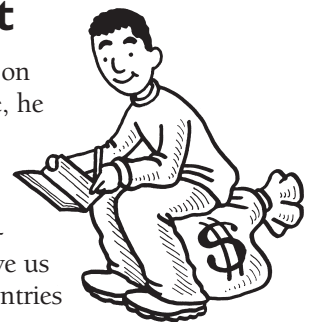
### Money management

Our son, Keith, thought money grew on trees. As soon as he got his allowance, he spent it on the latest electronic gadgets. When he ran out of money, he begged us for more. We needed a way to help him understand the importance of having a budget.

My sister-in-law works at a bank, and she suggested setting up a pretend checking account for Keith. She even gave us a checkbook for him. We showed him how to fill out the entries and explained that it was his job to keep it balanced.

Each week, he writes his allowance, and any money he earns by doing extra chores, in his checkbook. (I hold onto his money as "the bank.") When he wants to buy something, he looks at his account to see if he has enough money.

Keith has started to think more about how much items cost and how to save for them—and the checkbook helps him practice addition and subtraction. ♥



## Q & A Safe with strangers

**Q:** How can I teach my child to be wary of people she doesn't know?

**A:** It's important to talk regularly with your youngster about strangers. Here are several safety tips to share:

▲ Stay at least one grown-up step away when someone you don't know tries to talk to you.

▲ If a person does or says something that makes you feel uncomfortable, run away. Look for a trusted adult to tell

immediately. *Examples:* a teacher, a police officer, a mother with her children.

▲ Use the buddy system when you go places. Take along a friend when you ride your bike, walk around the mall, or go to the playground.

▲ Always check with your parents before you change your plans or help someone (even if the person tells you it's an emergency and he or she needs help right away). ♥

