

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

Working Together for School Success

May 2015



## SHORT NOTES

### Keep friendships strong

Encourage your youngster to stay in touch with classmates over the summer. Let her invite friends over or arrange to meet at a park or a mini-golf course. She'll enjoy the get-togethers, and staying close will help her be ready to work and play with peers when school starts again.

### Saying thank you

As the school year comes to a close, teachers are sure to appreciate the best gift of all: a simple thank you. You and your child can write notes thanking his teacher for helping him learn to read or teaching fun science experiments, for example.

### Plan ahead for snack time

Kids are more likely to eat foods they help pick out. Take your youngster shopping for healthy snacks, such as watermelon, plain popcorn, and hummus with whole-wheat pita bread. Stock them front and center in the refrigerator and pantry so your child can grab a nutritious treat when she takes a break from playing.

### Worth quoting

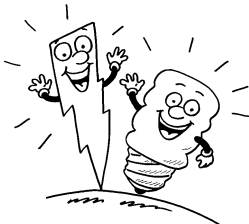
"The true delight is in the finding out rather than in the knowing."

Isaac Asimov

## JUST FOR FUN

**Kyle:** What is the difference between lightning and electricity?

**Jenna:**  
We have to pay for electricity.



## Summer learning games

Learning is more fun when you turn it into a game! Try these family games that let your child play with words, numbers, and science.

### Spelling cups

Be the first to unscramble the letters and guess the word. You'll need cups and magnetic letters or Scrabble tiles. One player secretly thinks of a word and places each letter under a separate upside-down cup. The other players take turns flipping over one cup. Let everyone see the letter, cover it back up, and slide the cups around to mix them up. At any point, a player can call out the word being spelled—but if he's wrong, he's out. Guess the word correctly, and you make the next word.

### Bull's-eye math

Have your youngster use sidewalk chalk to draw a target with four rings. He should write 10 in the outer ring, 25 in the next, 50 in the third, and 100 in the center circle. (Use 1, 2, 5, and 10 for a younger child.) To play, stand a few feet away from the target, and take turns



tossing a pebble onto it. Each time, add the number from the ring your pebble lands on to your score. Write the equation you made in chalk ( $50 + 25 = 75$ ;  $75 + 50 = 125$ ). Reach 500 points to win.

### Science scavenger hunt

Together, think of 12 small natural objects found on the ground. *Examples:* twig, dandelion, berry, buckeye. Then, each person labels sections of an empty egg carton for the items. Go to the park, search for the objects, and put them in the matching spots. The first person to fill his egg carton wins. ♥

## Outdoor volunteers

Build a family helping habit this summer. These ideas will encourage your youngster to do community service while she enjoys the sunshine:

- Sign up to volunteer during a fund-raising walk. Your child could work with you at a pit stop, handing water cups to participants.
- Lend a hand at a charity yard sale at a school, community center, or place of worship. Together, you might sort and tag donations. Or your youngster could bag purchases for customers as you ring them up.
- Work in the garden at a school or an assisted-living facility. Your child can help weed, plant, water, and harvest. If you garden at home, consider giving some vegetables to a food pantry or soup kitchen that accepts homegrown produce. ♥



## Safe and occupied

What will your youngster do this summer? Whether you work outside the home or not, you'll want to keep her busy, happy, and safe. Here are tips.

**Look for activities.** Public libraries and parks and recreation departments have programs to match any child's interests. Look for free or low-cost activities like music workshops, board game clubs, and tumbling classes.



**Take turns.** Neighbors can set up a schedule for watching each other's children play in a backyard or at a playground. Or consider swapping child care with a parent who works different days or opposite shifts. Also, you

could arrange carpools for driving to camps or day care.

**Find low-cost camps.** Check into city or county camps, where prices are typically lower than at private camps. You might qualify for help with fees or be able to use flexible spending account funds or earn dependent-care tax credits.♥

### ACTIVITY CORNER



### Stuck on crafts

Duct tape is all the rage these days. Look for it in fun patterns and colors, or let your child add stickers to plain duct tape. Then, encourage him to be creative with projects like these.

#### Bookmarks

Wrap duct tape around and around a craft stick to make a bookmark. Or cut two strips the same size, stick them together, and punch a hole in the top to tie a ribbon through.



#### Party decorations

Form miniature flags on toothpicks, and put each one in a cupcake. For place-mats, cut the front and back panels from cereal boxes. Add strips of tape arranged in different patterns and designs.

#### Containers

Cover baby food or canning jars with colorful duct tape to create pencil holders or vases. Make fun storage containers for small toys by decorating shoe boxes with duct tape.♥

### Q & A

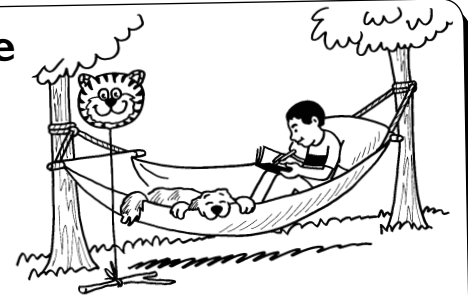
#### Avoid summer slide

**Q:** I've been hearing about how children often lose skills while school is out. How can I keep my son from experiencing this "summer slide"?

**A:** It's true that students tend to forget some of what they learned during the school year. Talk to your son's teacher to see if there are specific subjects he should work on, such as writing or math.

Then, use summer activities or time in the car to practice. You could give him a journal, and after a trip to the zoo or a museum, he can write about what he saw. Or as you drive, he might count red and green lights and say what fraction each color represents of the total.

Also, sign your child up for your library's summer reading program. Have him check out books and read at least 20–30 minutes a day. Ask him to tell you about the books, and talk to him about your own reading, too.♥



### PARENT TO PARENT

#### Back-to-school prep

Last year, I made the mistake of waiting until the last minute to prepare my kids for back-to-school. This year, with my younger daughter starting first grade and my older one going to middle school, we're going to try a few changes.

First, I will schedule their physicals right away, since their doctors' calendars filled up fast last year. Also, we'll shop early for school supplies to take advantage of

sales and make sure the kids get the colors they want.

Finally, we let the girls stay up later during summer, and last year they had a hard time adjusting to their school-year bedtime. So in August, we'll gradually move bedtime a little earlier each week.

We'll see if my plan works. I'm sure every year I'll learn something new about helping two kids get ready for school!♥



### OUR PURPOSE

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

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ISSN 1540-5621