

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

Working Together for School Success

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## SHORT NOTES

### Stretch your memory

Try this on-the-go game to sharpen your child's memory. Pick something you see out the car window, and describe it using one adjective. ("Red barn.") Your youngster repeats your words and adds another object with a different adjective. ("Red barn, big bulldozer.") Keep going until someone can't remember the list.

### Pretend play

Imaginary play boosts creativity and lets children practice adult roles. Offer props that inspire your child to pretend, such as old clothes and shoes for dressing up or a chalkboard and chalk to play school. You could suggest ideas that will spark her imagination, too. ("How would you teach your favorite subject?")

## DID YOU KNOW?

Asthma leads to more school absences than any other chronic condition—and spring allergies can trigger attacks. If your child has asthma, talk to his doctor about ways he can stay healthy. You might help him keep a diary of attacks, with the date, time, and weather, and what he was doing beforehand. Together, look for patterns to identify triggers.

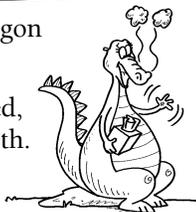
### Worth quoting

"You cannot use up creativity. The more you use, the more you have."  
Maya Angelou

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** How did the dragon burn his hand?

**A:** When he sneezed, he covered his mouth.



## Develop strong communication skills

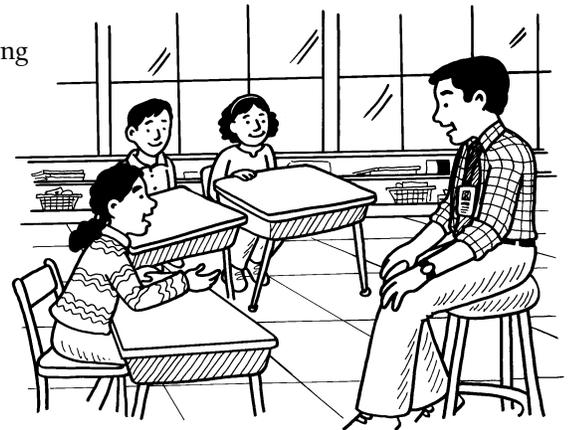
Whether your child is participating in a class discussion, chatting with a friend or relative, or answering a teacher's question, she'll need to be a good communicator. Here are strategies to try.

### Get started

Good communicators know how to start a discussion and keep it going. Let your youngster ask you a yes-or-no question. ("Do you have a pet?") Then, tell her to pose an open-ended question—one that can't be answered with yes or no. ("Why do you think most people have dogs or cats rather than other pets?") She'll see how open-ended questions can lead to more interesting discussions.

### Jump in

Your child can join a classroom discussion or everyday conversation by "piggybacking." First, she should listen closely to what someone says. Then, she can build on it, adding her own ideas. For example, after a classmate speaks, she could say, "That's true. I was thinking..."



Or your child might restate in her own words what the person said and then share her idea or ask a follow-up question.

### Explain reasoning

When your youngster expresses her thoughts, encourage her to back them up with facts or opinions. As she answers a teacher's question, she can refer to something she learned in class or read in a textbook to support her statement. If she's responding to a classmate during a discussion, she could say whether she agrees or disagrees and tell why.♥

## Spring volunteering

It's not too late to be a parent volunteer! As the school year comes to a close, your youngster's teacher will appreciate a hand. Ask if she needs help with any of these tasks.

### ● Organizing or assisting with a class party.

You could email other parents, bring healthy snacks, plan games, or take photos.

● **Packing up the classroom.** The teacher may want someone to put books and supplies in boxes or to take down bulletin boards and other decorations.

● **Wrapping up projects.** There might be things you can do from home, such as binding student books or framing children's artwork.♥



# Siblings who get along

Consider these two ideas for building bonds between your children. They'll gain friends for a lifetime—and life will be more pleasant for everyone now.

## 1. Be a team

Show your youngsters how much fun it can be to team up. Play board games in teams—kids vs. parents. Or consider getting a cooperative board game like *Race to the Treasure* or *Castle Panic*. You could also suggest that they collaborate on a project, such as building a birdhouse or creating a website.



## 2. Find common ground

Having shared hobbies gives siblings something to talk about and to do together. Notice activities that your children both like, and encourage them to enjoy them with each other. For instance, you might sign them up for cooking lessons, get

them new packages of trading cards to share, or send them out to play catch. *Tip:* Even though you might want to join in the fun, try to give them time alone to share their passions and build their relationship.♥

### ACTIVITY CORNER

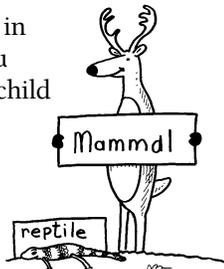


## Explore nature

Observing the busy animals and blooming plant life during spring can help your youngster learn about and appreciate nature. Try these activities.

### Classify animals.

Which creatures live in your area? When you spot one, have your child name it and say the category it belongs in. You may see frogs (amphibians), lizards (reptiles), robins (birds), deer (mammals), and butterflies (insects). Suggest that she draw and label pictures of the animals.



### Q & A

## Chores: Good for everyone

**Q:** I know it's a good idea to give children chores. But by the time I listen to my daughter complain and show her what to do, it seems easier just to do the work myself. Any advice?

**A:** Chores are important because they teach responsibility and encourage your child to be a contributing member of the household. Initially, it may take extra time to have your daughter do chores, but once she gets into the habit, her help will save you time.



Start by giving her jobs that she can feel confident about, such as clearing the table after meals or watering plants.

Once the chores become part of her daily routine, assign more challenging ones like vacuuming the car or mopping the kitchen floor. You'll have fewer tasks on your list, and she'll become more responsible.♥

## A reading challenge

By reading more complex books, your child can learn new words, facts, and ideas. He'll also be exposed to more complicated plots and will grow as a reader. Share these suggestions:

- Provide context. Knowing something about the topic or setting will make a tougher book easier to comprehend. If your youngster is reading a novel set in China, he could talk to someone who has been there or look up the country online (try a children's site like [kids.nationalgeographic.com](http://kids.nationalgeographic.com)).

- Encourage your child to look at a simpler book on the same subject. A picture-book biography about Harriet Tubman may help your youngster better understand a textbook chapter on the civil rights movement, for instance.



- Suggest that your child read complicated material with pencil and paper in hand. He can jot down questions, words to look up, or facts he wants to learn more about.♥

### OUR PURPOSE

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

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