

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

Working Together for School Success

November 2012

Toluca Lake Elementary School  
Parent Center - (818) 980-4980



## SHORT NOTES

### Vocabulary builder

A key ring and some index cards can help your youngster practice vocabulary words. Suggest that she write words on the fronts of index cards and definitions on the backs. She can hole-punch the cards and slide them onto a key ring. It's a portable study tool that she can use anywhere she goes!

### Talking about drugs

When your child takes medicine, use the opportunity to bring up drug safety. Together, read the directions carefully. Then, explain that prescriptions can be harmful if taken by someone else or if you don't follow the instructions. You might also let him know there are drug-free ways to feel better, such as using ice for an injury.

### Left or right?

Does your youngster sometimes mix up left and right? This trick can help. Tell her to make an L with each hand using her thumbs and forefingers. The L on the left is correct, and the one on the right is backward. To figure out left and right, she can make Ls and remember that left starts with L.

### Worth quoting

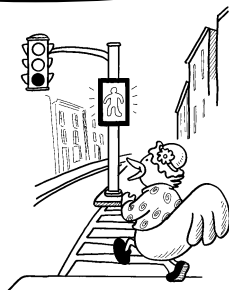
"The more that you read, the more things you will know. The more that you learn, the more places you'll go."

Dr. Seuss

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Why did the chicken cross the road?

**A:** Because the light turned green.

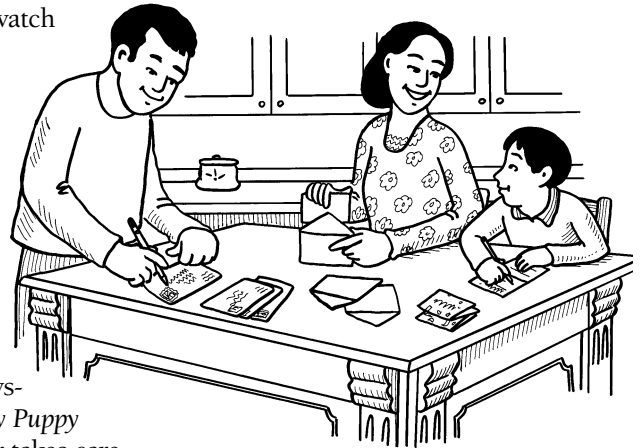


## Becoming more responsible

It's a wonderful feeling to watch with pride as your child takes responsibility for himself. But how do you get to that point? Consider these suggestions.

### Read stories

When you read together, have your youngster point out characters' responsible behavior. For instance, in *The Paperboy* by Dav Pilkey, a boy has a job delivering newspapers. And in *Just Me and My Puppy* by Mercer Mayer, Little Critter takes care of his dog. After you read, ask your child to think about ways he is responsible—and about new responsibilities he might be ready for.



### Make a magnetic chart

Have your youngster divide a sheet of paper into three columns. In the first one, he can list his responsibilities, including personal tasks (brush teeth, do homework) and household chores (make bed, set table). The other two columns should be labeled "To do" and "Done." Let him post the chart on the refrigerator and put magnets in the "To do" column. As he

finishes each task, he can move the magnet to "Done." At bedtime, his completed chart will show how responsible he was.

### Share household jobs

Do a family chore or project together. This will teach your child that people depend on each other to be responsible. For instance, you could mail party invitations, pack lunches, or wash the car. Each family member picks a step: fill out invitations, write addresses, or stamp, stuff, and seal envelopes. If everyone is responsible, you'll get the job done quickly! ♥

## Math games

All you need are dice and playing cards for these games that will build your child's math skills.

**Guess my roll.** Toss two dice without letting others see. Then, use addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division to give clues about your numbers (4, 5). *Example:* "If you divide my total by 3, you get 3." The first person to name the numbers rolls next.

**Add to 50.** Who can collect playing cards that come closest to 50—without going over? Remove face cards, deal two cards to each player, and stack the rest. Take turns drawing one card and secretly adding your numbers (ace = 1). Stop drawing when you have 50 or think the next card will put you over. When everyone is finished, announce your totals. *Variation:* For a younger child, play to 20. ♥



# My report card

How is your youngster doing in school this year? Her report card can give you valuable information about her progress. Try these steps for reviewing it with her.

**1. Think first.** If you get the report card at a parent-teacher conference, ask for advice about discussing it at home. If your youngster brings the report card home, ask how she feels about it before sharing your thoughts.



**2. Start with the positive.**

Perhaps your child brought up her spelling grade from last year, or maybe she got good citizenship marks. Mentioning something like this sets a pleasant tone for your report card discussion.

**3. Focus on effort.** Try to make comments like “All of that studying really paid off!”

(instead of “You’re so good at science!”). This lets her know she earned the grade by working hard and can inspire her to try hard next grading period.

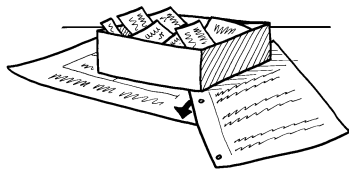
**4. Finish with a plan.** Talk about any grades that are lower than expected, and brainstorm ways she can bring them up. Share her teacher’s advice from your conference, too.♥

## Q & A Coping with worries

**Q:** My son spends a lot of time worrying. He is always asking questions like “What if I fail my test?” or “What if we have a fire?” How can I help him feel less anxious?



**A:** Talk through worries with your child. Then, come up with a plan to help him feel more in control. When he is nervous about a test, offer to quiz him the night before. If he is anxious about fires, make a family emergency plan together. He could draw a fire escape map and organize a household fire drill, for example.



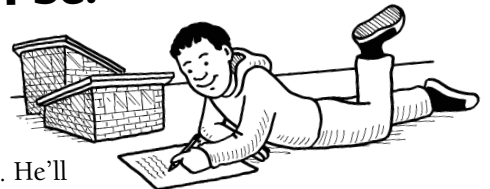
You might also have your son make a “worry journal” or a “worry box.” He can write down his concerns in a notebook or jot them on slips of paper and keep them in a box under his bed. Simply putting them into words can help him work on conquering his fears.

Finally, if your child’s anxiety seems to be interfering with his schoolwork or friendships, talk to his school counselor or pediatrician.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### What will I be?

Your child has probably wondered what he will be when he grows up. Take his imagination a step further and encourage him to write a description for his perfect job. He’ll learn about careers—and get some writing practice.



Begin by having him read job listings in the newspaper or online. He might discover interesting positions like park ranger or flight attendant. He’ll also find out about job duties (leading park tours, keeping passengers safe) and skills needed (knowledge of plants and animals, friendliness).

Then, suggest that your youngster create an ad for a job he would like. If he enjoys building with Legos and drawing pictures, he might want to be an architect. He could write, “We need a creative person to design buildings. You should know how to use design software.” *Tip:* He can find facts about all kinds of careers at [bls.gov/ooh](http://bls.gov/ooh).♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

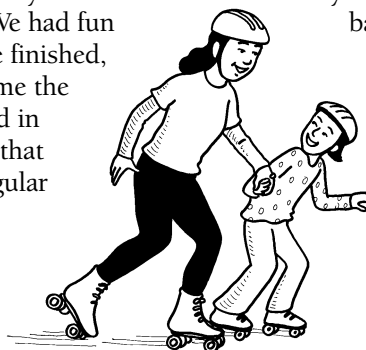
### Family exercise leaders

My kids saw me working out with an aerobics video recently and asked if they could join in. We had fun together, and when we finished, my daughter showed me the sit-ups she had learned in PE. Then, I suggested that we make exercise a regular part of our week.

Now we take turns choosing an activity and leading the workout. I showed

the kids how to do Zumba moves, my daughter held a jump-rope contest, and my son organized relay races in the backyard.

One time I surprised the kids with a trip to an indoor pool, and another day, we went roller skating at the park. Working out as a family is helping us stay fit. And taking turns picking the activity means we don’t get tired of the same old routine.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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