

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

Working Together for School Success

April 2011



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

## SHORT NOTES

### Yard sales

Take advantage of yard sales to stock up on learning supplies like books, blocks, and magnetic letters. Also consider materials that your child can sort and count (beads, marbles). Look for board games, too. Even if pieces are missing, they will probably have items she can use (dice, pretend money).

### Good attendance

As the weather warms up and summer is on the way, your child might ask to stay home. A simple reply ("It's important to be in school every day") shows him that good attendance is important. After school, plenty of outside playtime will help him fight spring fever and stay fit.

### Earning trust

Ask your child to name an honest person (best friend, uncle). Point out that she probably trusts that person because he tells the truth regularly. Explain that it's important to be honest all the time so she can earn others' trust.

### Worth quoting

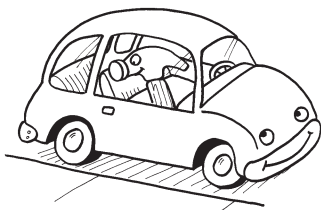
"Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak. Courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen."

Winston Churchill

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** If you were locked in a car with a hammer, what would you do?

**A:** Unlock the door.



## Help for bullying

As a parent, you want your child to be happy and safe, and that is one reason it's so disturbing to hear about bullying. Here are answers to commonly asked questions that can help you deal with this problem.

**Q:** What's the difference between bullying and teasing?

**A:** Sometimes it's not easy to tell. Usually bullying is ongoing. One person threatens, hurts, or embarrasses another repeatedly over a period of time. Also, a bully is more powerful than the child he's bothering—he may be bigger or older or have more friends. Teasing, although it can be hurtful, often takes place between friends or equals.

**Q:** How can I reduce my child's chances of being bullied?

**A:** A child with a healthy dose of self-esteem is less likely to be picked on. Encourage your youngster to spend time with people who make her feel good, such as a friend she enjoys laughing with. Also, notice if your child puts herself down ("I'm not pretty like Sara").



Ask why she feels that way, and help her put her feelings in perspective. ("She does have pretty hair—what do you like about you?")

**Q:** What should I do if my youngster tells me she's being bullied?

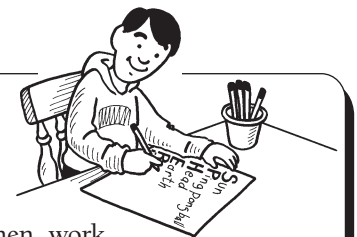
**A:** First, listen carefully and take her seriously. Then, talk about strategies to handle bullying. Since most bullying takes place when a youngster is alone, encourage her to play with other children at recess, sit near the bus driver, or stay with a group at lunch. *Note:* Let her know that you will meet with her teacher so he is aware of what's going on. ♥

## A better vocabulary

Learning new words is an adventure. Show your child how much fun vocabulary building can be with these activities.

**Write acrostics.** Have your youngster write a word vertically on graph paper, one letter per box. Then, work together to use each letter as the first letter of a new word. The trick? Try to relate each word to his original word—that will help him remember its meaning. *Example:* For SPHERE, you might write sun, Ping-Pong ball, head, earth, round, equator.

**Keep a word journal.** Encourage family members to add interesting words and their definitions to a shared notebook. Suggest that your child use words he learns in school or reads in books. *Idea:* He can find a new word a day on the Daily Buzzword page at [www.wordcentral.com](http://www.wordcentral.com). ♥



# Experimenting with water

It's in the sky, in the sink, and even in your youngster's breath. It's water! Try these science activities to show your child the different forms that our most common liquid can take.



A circle of steam will appear on the mirror—that's condensation.

It forms because his breath contains *water vapor*, and when it hits the cool mirror, tiny droplets of water form. Can he find other examples of condensation? (*Examples*: fogged-up car window, steam coming out of a whistling teakettle.)

## Condensation

Clouds form in the sky because of *condensation*. Your youngster can see condensation for himself by standing close to a mirror, taking a deep breath, and exhaling.

## Surface tension

How many marbles can your child add to a full glass of water? Have him fill a glass all the way to the top with water. Then, ask him to gently drop marbles into the water, one at a time. He should carefully watch what happens.

The water will rise into an oval shape above the rim before eventually spilling over. You can explain that the molecules in water cling together, which creates something called *surface tension*. This causes a "skin" to form on top that keeps the water from dribbling out.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT No more zeroes

Last quarter, my daughter didn't do a few homework assignments. She didn't think the zeroes she received were a big deal—until she got her report card.

I explained how averages work. If she got three 100s and one zero, her average would be 75, or a C. I had her write down the math ( $100 + 100 + 100 + 0 = 300$ , and  $300 \div 4 = 75$ ). She was surprised to see how much just one zero could affect her grade.

Then, I helped her come up with a plan. In class, she writes down each assignment as it's given. At the end of the day, she reads the list and gathers the materials she



needs. At home, we review the list together, she does the work, and I glance over it to be sure it's finished. Finally, she checks off each assignment on her sheet as she turns it in.

So far this quarter, my daughter hasn't gotten any zeroes, and we're hoping for better grades on her next report card.♥



## Q & A

### Money for chores?

**Q:** Some families we know give their children an allowance in exchange for doing chores. Is this a good idea?

**A:** Many parents give an allowance so their children can practice managing money. But chores are assigned for a different reason. They help youngsters learn responsibility, and they let family members work together to take care of a household. Since the two (allowance and chores) aren't really related, it may make more sense to keep them separate.

Paying your child for chores could also have unexpected results. When he doesn't feel like washing the dishes, for instance, he might decide to take a pay cut.

If you decide to give your youngster an allowance, tell him that he can count on it each week. Also, when you assign a chore, let him know you're counting on him to do the job so your household runs smoothly.♥



## ACTIVITY CORNER

### My self-portrait

Teach your child to pay attention to details with this autobiographical art project.

**Materials:** mirror, lipstick or dry-erase marker, paper, pencil, crayons

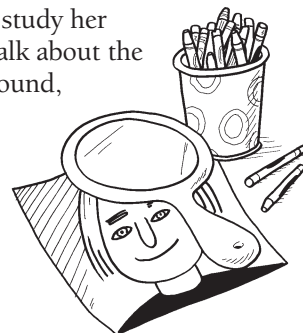
Ask your youngster to study her reflection in the mirror. Talk about the shape of her face—is it round, oval, or heart shaped?

**Hint:** Let her use lipstick or a dry-erase marker to outline her face's reflection on the mirror so she can see the shape clearly.

While looking closely at her reflection, she can sketch the outline of her face on a piece of paper. Then, still glancing at her reflection, she can add her features.

Encourage her to notice details such as the placement of her eyes, the width of her nose and mouth, and the arch of her eyebrows. Finally, have her use crayons to color in her eyes, lips and cheeks, and add hair.

**Tip:** Remind her that a portrait doesn't have to look like a photograph—that's what cameras are for. Her self-portrait is *her* creation.♥



## OUR PURPOSE

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

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