

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

November 2019

Robert Frost Middle School

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SHORT NOTES



Promises matter

Before you promise your child something—for instance, that you'll take him to the playground—make sure you'll be able to follow through. This teaches him that he can count on you, and he'll learn to keep promises, too. *Tip:* If needed, include contingencies. (“We'll go as long as it's not raining.”)

Speak up about allergies

Family gatherings are good opportunities for your youngster to speak up about food allergies, whether she has one herself or is being considerate of others. She might ask the host if a casserole contains eggs or tell a cousin who's allergic to dairy that there's milk in the mashed potatoes.

Boost working memory

This activity improves your child's working (or short-term) memory. Have him close his eyes while you draw three emojis (cupcake, sun, leaf). Let him study the paper for five seconds, flip it over, and try to name the emojis. Repeat the activity, adding one more each time. How many can he remember?

Worth quoting

“When you see someone without a smile, give them one of yours.”
Zig Ziglar

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What's black and white and black and white and black and white?

A: A penguin rolling down a hill.



An atmosphere of learning

When families create a supportive learning environment at home, children are more successful in the classroom. Use these tips to make your home a great place for your youngster to learn.

Stock up

Fill your house with items your child can use to explore and investigate. Visit the library regularly so you always have plenty of books. Have her set aside a drawer for math and science supplies (ruler, measuring cups and spoons, food coloring, seeds). Also, display a map or globe—when she reads or hears about a place, she can discover where it's located.

Build on interests

Notice what your youngster is into, such as dinosaurs or music, and help her learn more about it. Read nonfiction books or watch documentaries together. Let her make a hallway gallery based on her interests. She could create and hang up posters to share interesting facts and photos with family members.



Learn together

Learn something new as a family. You might work on American Sign Language and then practice together. Or learn to code or knit. You'll enjoy a new hobby as you expand your knowledge. Also, plan special nights where you play board games. Try ones that build language skills (Scrabble, Boggle) or involve math or logic (Monopoly, chess).♥

I'm thankful for...

What is your family grateful for? Try this idea to find out—and teach your child about gratitude.

Pick categories. Choose six crayons, and assign each color a category. *Example:* red = person, blue = place, green = object, yellow = food, orange = animal, purple = your choice. Place the crayons in a bowl, and give each person a sheet of paper.

Draw and write. Take turns selecting a crayon, drawing a heart on your paper, and writing something you're grateful for that matches the category. Your youngster might write “My Aunt Amy” in red and “Macaroni and cheese” in yellow.

Share. Once everyone has a heart of every color, read what's in your “hearts” to each other. Display the papers for a nice reminder to be grateful all year long!♥

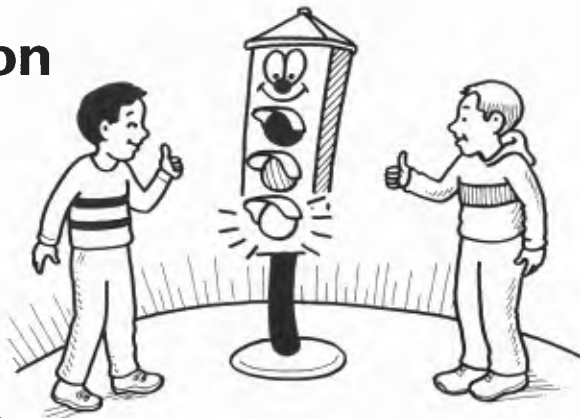


Conflict resolution know-how

Healthy conflict resolution skills help your child maintain friendships, solve problems, and stand up for himself in positive ways. Share these strategies.

Red light! Green light!

Problems are easier to solve when your youngster is calm. Suggest that he think of a feeling like anger or frustration as a “red light”—a signal to stop and think. Say he and a friend are arguing over the topic for their group



presentation. He might take a few deep breaths or walk away for a little while. Once he calms down (the light turns green), he may be ready to think of a solution, such as combining their ideas to create a whole new topic.

“I” statements

When your child is trying to resolve a conflict, suggest that he start each statement with “I” instead of “you.” *Example:* “I get angry when I’m yelled at” rather than “You make me angry.” He’ll put the focus on his own feelings rather than blaming the other person—which can keep the conflict from escalating.♥

Q & A Attend parent-teacher conferences

Q: My son usually gets good grades and isn’t having any problems in school. Do I still need to go to a parent-teacher conference?

A: Yes! A conference lets you and your child’s teacher exchange information beyond what’s on his report card. Plus, meeting with the teacher is one way to keep the lines of communication open.



The teacher will talk about your son’s strengths and areas for improvement. For instance, he might say he has good work habits but could participate more in class. And you may get to see his writer’s notebook or science journal. You’ll also learn how he’s doing socially—does he get along well with others?

Finally, ask the teacher what you can do at home to support your son.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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www.rfeonline.com

ISSN 1540-5621

ACTIVITY CORNER

Persuasive writing: Buy my product

Could your child convince someone to buy a rock? What about an ice cube? This silly family activity lets her practice persuasive writing by creating a commercial for an unlikely “product.”



1. Decide what to sell. Ask each family member to think of something you probably wouldn’t buy in real life, such as an empty cardboard box, a snowball, or a brick.

2. Write a script. Each person should make up a commercial advertising her product. Include a vivid description of your item and convincing reasons to buy it. *Example:* “Introducing our smooth, perfectly square ice cube! Just this single cube will keep your small glass of lemonade nice and cool—without watering it down.”

3. Present your ads. Take turns performing your commercials in your best TV-announcer voice. The advertisement voted most persuasive wins!♥

PARENT TO PARENT

Mix math with fitness

When my daughter Elizabeth was working on addition facts, we invented a game to help her practice—and to give all of us some exercise.

She wrote the numbers 1–10 on separate index cards, and I hid them around our yard. Then, she wrote the same numbers on separate craft sticks and put the sticks (number ends down) in a cup. We took turns drawing a stick, running to find any number card, and

adding the two numbers to get our score for that turn. So if Elizabeth drew the 10 stick and got a 6 card, her score would be 16, since $10 + 6 = 16$. The winner was the person with the highest score after all the sticks were used.

Our game has grown with Elizabeth. Once she mastered basic addition facts, we wrote bigger numbers to play with. And now that she’s learning multiplication, we multiply to get our score.♥

