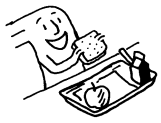
Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

September 2019

PVPV/Rawlings Elementary School



SHORT NOTES

Be considerate

Family meals offer plenty of chances for your youngster to practice being considerate. As you serve yourselves food, you might say, "Make sure to leave enough so everyone gets some." Or if there's one piece of chicken left, encourage your child to ask if anyone wants to split it instead of taking the whole thing for himself.

Tired after school?

As your youngster gets used to the routine of a new school year, she may be more tired than usual. Be sure she's getting 9–11 hours of sleep each night. Also, try to keep evenings low-key by not planning too many activities.

Cardboard box "origami"

Before tossing boxes in the recycling bin, use them to build your child's spatial sense and math skills. Have him pull each box apart at the seams and lay it flat. Can he tape it back together? *Idea:* Challenge him to make a mini pizza or cereal box using construction paper and tape.

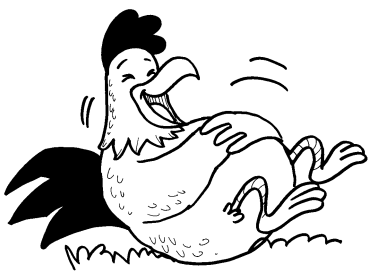
Worth quoting

"Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."
Fred Rogers

JUST FOR FUN

Q: How many eggs did the farmer collect from his biggest rooster?

A: Zero. Roosters don't lay eggs!



The ABCs of school success

School success begins at home! While your child is learning her ABCs, 123s, and much more, she can get the year off to a great start with these *other* ABCs.

Attend every day

More time in class = more learning. Help your youngster attend school regularly by scheduling doctor appointments and family vacations outside of school hours. Also, she can cut down on sick days by eating her fruits and vegetables, washing her hands often, and getting plenty of physical activity.

Be organized

Forgotten homework? A backpack that doubles as a black hole? Good organizational skills prevent those problems. Together, brainstorm ways for your child to get—and stay—organized. For instance, she could choose a special folder for bringing home and returning homework and use a zipper bag to store pencils and other supplies.

Check in daily

Designate a time each day to sit down with your youngster, talk about what she did in school, and review papers she brought home. You might read a story she wrote or look over her math test, for example. This simple routine shows her that you care about what she's learning. Plus, you'll notice where she's doing well or if she's struggling with anything so you can follow up with her teacher.♥

Back to school…for parents

School rules keep students safe and let teachers do their job. Show your youngster that parents can help by following rules—just like he does. Here are a few examples:

- Check in at the office as soon as you enter the school building, and be prepared to show identification.
- If you drive your child to school, be familiar with drop-off and pickup procedures. For instance, stay in your car, obey staff and patrol officers, and help your youngster exit the car quickly and safely.
- Follow rules for sending food to school. Is there a no-peanut policy? Are birthday treats allowed?
- Contact the teacher to arrange visits ahead of time rather than dropping in.♥

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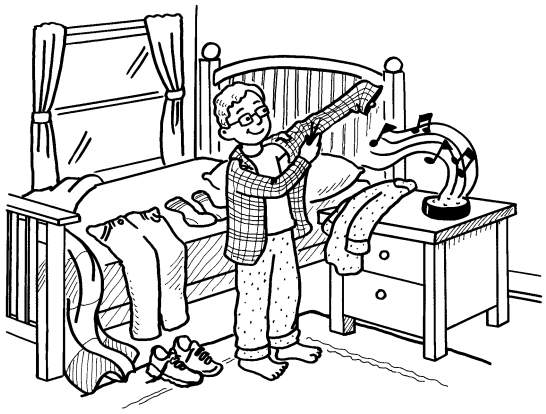
Getting out the door

Mornings help to set the tone for your child's school day. Consider these ideas for a routine that will send him off to school relaxed and ready to learn.

Add a "cushion." Does your youngster need to walk out the door at 8 a.m.? Have him pretend he has to leave by 7:45 a.m. and adjust his routine accordingly. If he's ready early, great! The cushion of extra time will make the morning feel more relaxed—and maybe even give him time to read for pleasure or review spelling words.

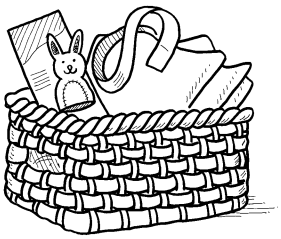


Simplify breakfast. Make healthy, ready-to-eat breakfast items ahead of time with your child. Overnight oatmeal, hard-boiled eggs, cheese cubes with fruit, and favorite sandwiches are all good bets. *Idea:* Let your youngster eat breakfast at school. Enjoying a hot, healthy meal with friends is a nice way to start the day.

Use a musical countdown. Suggest that your child create a song playlist that fits the amount of time he has to get ready for school. Then, turn on the music when he wakes up. Once he's familiar with the order of the songs, he'll know how much time he has left just from listening to the music.♥

PARENT TO PARENT Basket of clues

My daughter Aisha loves that her teacher begins each morning by giving the children clues about what they'll learn that day. At back-to-school night, the teacher mentioned that this lets them practice reading and thinking logically, so I decided to try it at home.



The next Saturday morning, I left a basket of clues on the coffee table about what our family would do in the afternoon. It included a finger puppet, a tote bag, and a bookmark. I added a message: "We will have fun at this place *and* bring some of the fun home in the bag." Aisha figured out that we were going to the library to watch a puppet show and check out books.

Now on Friday nights, Aisha asks me to make a clue basket. Sometimes, she even thinks of an activity she'd like to do and writes clues for me.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

Resources for Educators,
a division of CCH Incorporated
128 N. Royal Avenue • Front Royal, VA 22630
800-394-5052 • rfecustomer@wolterskluwer.com
www.rfeonline.com

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ACTIVITY CORNER Time out for nature

Time spent enjoying nature has been shown to reduce stress and improve children's—and adults'—mental health. The outdoors is a great place to learn, too. Enjoy these five activities with your youngster.

1. Search for spiderwebs, and let her "collect" them by taking photos with your phone.

2. Find a place to sit quietly and listen to the birds. Can your child spot the birds that make each sound you hear?

3. Take a few deep breaths, and tell each other what outdoor scents you smell (pine trees, flowers).

4. Look for different types of rocks. She can sort them according to size, shape, or color.

5. Explore favorite outdoor places in all kinds of weather. Splash in puddles on a rainy morning. On a sunny afternoon, observe the shadows that leaves make on the ground as the breeze blows them around.♥

Q & A Persistence pays off

Q: *My son is always eager to try activities, such as karate or student council. But then he'll ask to drop out because they're "too hard" or "too much work." How should I handle this?*

A: Many youngsters are surprised when something that looks easy turns out to take hard work. Learning to find ways to overcome challenges will help your son stick with activities—and develop persistence.

When he mentions that a karate move or a student council job is taking too much effort, ask him what, specifically, is challenging. Then together, think of solutions. For example, if he's struggling with karate moves that involve balancing on one foot, brainstorm fun ways to improve his balance.

Over time, your child will get in the habit of looking for solutions instead of giving up.♥