

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

May 2018

Merkel Elementary School
Mrs. Nall, Principal



SHORT NOTES

The art of flexibility

Being flexible will allow your child to switch gears if plans change at the last minute or something doesn't work out as expected. Help him learn to "flex" his mind by playing board games with new rules you make up. Also, discuss how it's possible to do the same thing in different ways, such as taking two routes to the same house.

Hands-on studying

With household materials like sugar or rice, your youngster could add variety to her studying. Suggest that she spread sugar or rice into a baking dish and write spelling words or math facts with her finger. Using her senses can cement the information in her mind.

Annual checkup time?

If your child needs a checkup before school starts in the fall, book his appointment early. Pediatricians' schedules fill up quickly in the summer. *Tip:* Most schools require specific immunizations, so check that your youngster is up to date.

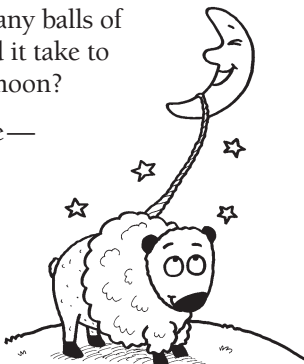
Worth quoting

"If you look the right way, you can see that the whole world is a garden."
Frances Hodgson Burnett

JUST FOR FUN

Q: How many balls of yarn would it take to reach the moon?

A: Just one—
if it's big enough!



Month-by-month learning

How can you keep the learning going while school is out? Try these fun ideas for taking advantage of monthly celebrations! Your child's skills will stay sharp, and you'll enjoy family time, too.

May

Let your youngster cycle her way to math practice during *National Bike Month*. Encourage her to set a goal for time spent biking, and then take regular family bike rides. She can create a graph to track her progress. Perhaps she'll make a picture graph and draw 1 bike wheel for every 15 minutes of cycling. She'll be able to calculate her time at a glance.

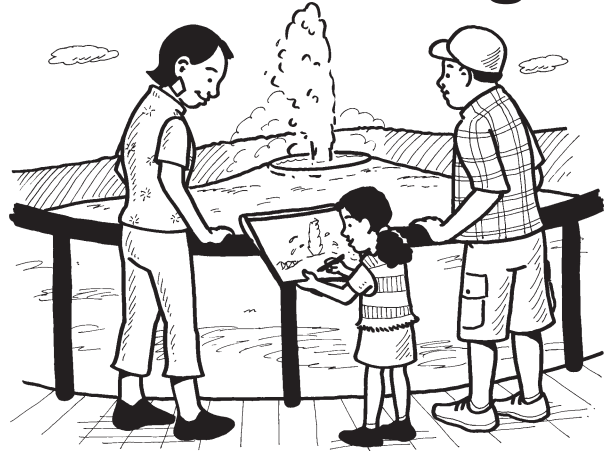
June

Inspire your child to use persuasive writing during *National Safety Month*. Together, brainstorm safe behaviors (wear seat belts in the car, stay indoors during thunderstorms). Next, have her make posters with slogans ("Be on the safe side: Buckle up before you ride!"), facts ("Seat belts save lives"), and photos of family members following the rule.

It's a wrap

Help your youngster bring the school year to a successful close with this to-do list:

- Thank teachers and other school staff. Your child could make cards or write thoughtful notes to show his appreciation.
- Suggest that he offer to assist his teacher with year-end jobs like taking down bulletin boards or packing up classroom games.
- Have your youngster find and return any books he borrowed from his teacher or the school library.♥



July

Celebrate *National Park and Recreation Month* by exploring nature. Visit local parks, and have your youngster record her observations and use them to design field guides. Take along paper and colored pencils so she can sketch and label plants and animals, describe streams, or map out trails.

August

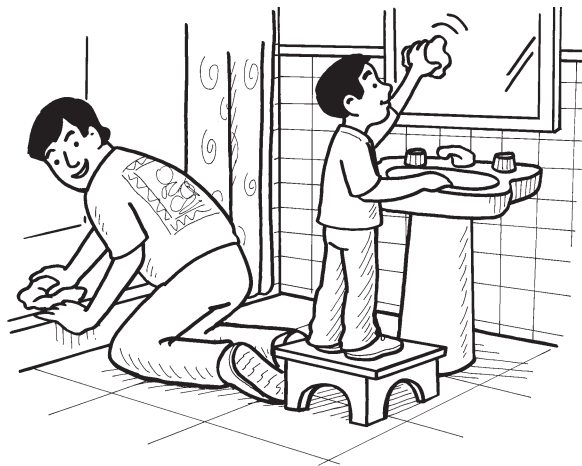
Build communication skills with *National Radio Day*. Challenge your child to "launch" a radio station. She should think about her audience and purpose—who her listeners would be and the type of programming they would want. Now she can develop scripts and record broadcasts!♥



Gaining life skills

The older your youngster gets, the more he'll be able to do for himself. Teach him basic life skills with these ideas.

Do tasks together. Your child may be too young to cook dinner or clean the entire bathroom by himself, but he can move toward doing those jobs by helping you. Give him a task, such as stirring casserole ingredients and pouring the mixture



into a baking dish—then you put it in the oven. Or you might scrub the shower while he wipes down the mirror and sink.

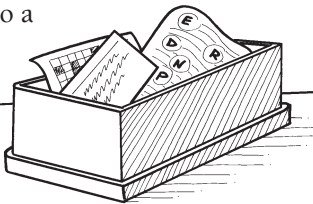
Hand over the reins. Decide what tasks your youngster may be ready for by thinking about what he can already do. If he knows how to make his bed, maybe you'll teach him to change the sheets. Demonstrate putting on the fitted sheet, tucking in the top sheet, and replacing the pillowcase. The next time, let him try it by himself with you nearby for help. Eventually he'll be ready to do it on his own.♥

ACTIVITY CORNER

“Escape” puzzles

Escape rooms, where players have to solve puzzles to get out, are popular these days. Here's a way to bring the idea home for free. The bonus? Your youngster will work on logical thinking as she and her friends play.

1. Choose a story line. Each child should think of a “mission,” perhaps one related to a topic they're studying or a book they're reading.



Example: “Escape Mars before a dust storm strikes.” She can write the scenario on an index card and place it in a shoebox.

2. Create clues. Have each player make up five puzzles to put in her box. For a Mars puzzle, your youngster might circle letters in a magazine article that can be arranged to spell *red planet* or make a crossword puzzle with words like *spaceship* and *cold*.

3. Escape! Now the children trade boxes and do the puzzles. The first person to solve all five has “escaped.” After they're all finished, they can make new boxes and play again.♥



Q & A Keep a family journal

Q: I'd like for my son to write more this summer. Any suggestions?

A: Your son may be motivated to write more if you make it a family event. Consider starting a household journal, and you'll wind up with a record of your summer together!



Place a notebook and a cup of pens or pencils in a visible spot, maybe on the kitchen counter. Ask everyone to write at least one entry per week. You might write about everyday things, such as swinging on a swing set, or special events like an Independence Day parade. Perhaps your child will add pictures to illustrate journal entries. Or he could tape in mementos like ticket stubs and photographs.

At the end of each week, take turns reading entries aloud. When he goes back to school in the fall, your son may want to share your journal with his new teacher. This is a nice way for her to learn something about your child and his family.♥

PARENT TO PARENT Talk about drugs

Our local police department held an information night about keeping kids away from drugs and alcohol. My daughter Bella is only 8, so I wasn't planning to attend until a friend asked me to go with her. I'm glad I did.

I found out that it is important to talk to children about drugs early and often. Taking the officers' advice, I went home and brought up the subject in a way Bella could understand. I explained that drugs

and alcohol are unhealthy and make it hard for people to do things they enjoy, such as swimming or reading. I also pointed out that these substances are illegal for kids and that if anyone asks her to try them, she should tell me or another adult right away.

Bella promised to say no to drugs. Of course, I know it may not be that easy when she's older and facing peer pressure. But at least the door is open, and we will keep talking about this challenging topic.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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