

Home & School CONNECTION[®]

Working Together for School Success

December 2017



East End Intermediate School
Jayme Steinbeck, Principal

SHORT NOTES

“I heard that!”

Good listening skills will help your child do well in every subject. Here’s an active way to practice. Choose a common word (*also*, *because*), and read a newspaper or magazine article aloud to her. She has to listen closely for the word—and do a jumping jack each time she hears it.

The importance of loyalty

It may seem easier for your youngster to stay quiet when others say unkind things about a friend. But explain that speaking up shows loyalty, and it’s the right thing to do. Help him brainstorm what to say, such as “That would really hurt his feelings” or “You’d be upset if someone said that about you.”

Let’s wash our hands

Hand washing is one of the best ways for your child to stay healthy—and to avoid spreading germs. She could make a poster by writing and illustrating the steps: 1. Wet. 2. Lather. 3. Rub 30 seconds. 4. Rinse. 5. Dry. Have her hang her poster in the bathroom to remind herself, and other family members, to wash properly.

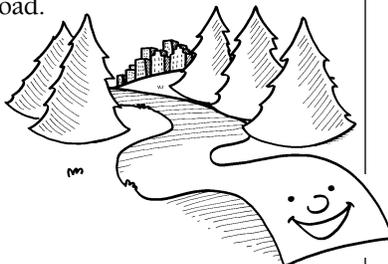
Worth quoting

“A problem is a chance for you to do your best.” Duke Ellington

JUST FOR FUN

Q: What goes through towns and over hills but doesn’t move?

A: A road.



Winter reading

Does your youngster prefer to read alone, with family members, or in the company of friends? With these ideas, he can do all three this winter.

Choose themes

Encourage your child to read more by coming up with wintry themes for choosing books. For example, he might name “ice-skating” or “penguins” and pick out a biography of an Olympic skater or an adventure tale set in Antarctica. After he finishes each book, he can write the title on a paper snowflake and tape it to a wall. How many snowflakes can he hang up?

Discuss poetry

On a snowy day—or any day—read winter poetry together. Get a volume like *It’s Snowing! It’s Snowing!* (Jack Prelutsky) or *Winter Bees & Other Poems of the Cold* (Joyce Sidman). Boost your youngster’s reading comprehension by talking about the poets’ word choices.



Why did Prelutsky write “the air is a silvery blur”? What did Sidman mean by “the sun’s pale wafer”?

Read with friends

Your child can see friends over winter break and practice reading at the same time by forming a book club. They might pick a chapter book to read, then meet to discuss it and enjoy a related snack, craft, or game. Or they could each bring a different picture book and take turns reading aloud. *Idea:* Suggest that they keep their club going all year long!♥

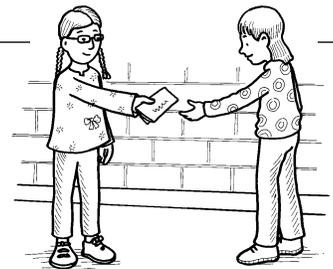
Coping with stress

Whether your child is stressed about a test or worried about a disagreement with a friend, try these strategies for helping her cope.

● **Name it.** Have her say what, specifically, is making her feel stressed. Maybe she’s afraid she’ll forget everything she studied or she doesn’t know what to say to her friend.

● **Focus on solutions.** Help your youngster think of ways she could relieve some pressure. She might review her study guide one last time the morning of the test or write a note to her friend saying she misses her and wants to play.

● **Think positive.** Remind your child of tests she did well on or ways she resolved problems with friends in the past. Suggest inspiring phrases she could say to herself, such as, “I know I can do it!”♥



Independent me

The end goal of parenting is to work your way out of a job. You want to teach your youngster to spread her wings and eventually take care of herself. Consider this advice.

Let her try. Out of habit, you might do tasks that your child could do for herself. If you've always done her laundry, for instance, you may not realize she's able to do it on her own. Show her the steps, and see how she does with it for a week. If she isn't quite



ready, work alongside her a few more times until she can handle it herself.

Resist “fixing” it.

Your youngster probably won't make her sandwich or pack her overnight bag exactly the way you would. But she will feel more independent if she does it her way. If she struggles, offer gentle support. Say she's trying to put a big batch

of leftovers into a small container. You could set out a bigger one, and suggest that she try again.♥

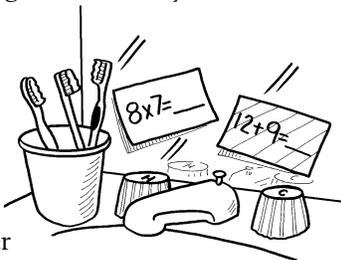
PARENT TO PARENT



Sticky-note math

My sons love games, but it's hard to find ones they can play together that aren't too easy for my older one or too hard for his little brother. At a recent school math night, I discovered a game that's just right for both boys.

First, I wrote 10 addition problems on yellow sticky notes for my younger son and 10 multiplication problems on green sticky notes for my older one. Then, I stuck the notes around the house.



To play, the boys race around to grab one sticky note at a time, show it to me, and say the answer. If they answer correctly, they keep the note. If not, I hold onto it for more practice later. The player with the most notes at the end wins.

My little one was happy that having different problems gave him a fair chance to win—and both boys got a chance to work on the math they're learning.♥

Q & A

Fit volunteering into your schedule

Q: I work odd hours, but I still want to pitch in at my daughter's school. What are some options?

A: Any time you spend volunteering will help the school and show your child that her education counts.

Get in touch with her teacher about becoming a volunteer. She may have jobs you can do at home, such as stapling together student-made books, or tasks that could be done during the school day like decorating bulletin boards. Don't forget to check with her “specials” teachers, too. A PE teacher may appreciate a hand organizing equipment after school, while a music teacher may love assistance making props for the school musical.

Finally, touch base with the school office and the PTA for other possibilities. They're sure to have ways you can help when your schedule permits.♥



ACTIVITY CORNER

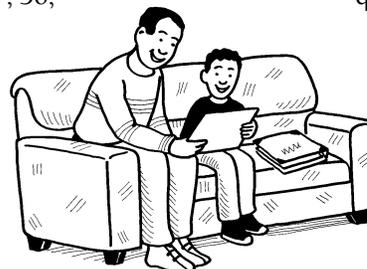
What a memory!

Your child's memory is like a muscle—the more he uses it, the stronger it will be! Here are two fun ways to strengthen his memory of what he hears and sees.

1. Recall numbers. Randomly name four numbers, such as 17, 36, 54, and 98. Can your youngster repeat the numbers back to you? Try again with five numbers, then six, and then seven. Talk about what strategies he uses to remember. Maybe he

recites them in his head or relates them to numbers in his life—perhaps your house number is 54 or your phone number ends in 98.

2. Remember details. Together, look at a photograph for one minute. Put it away, and take turns asking each other questions about it. *Examples:* “How many trees are there?” or “Who is wearing a striped shirt?” Try again with a new photo—your child is likely to look more closely this time and recall more specifics.♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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Middle Years

Working Together for School Success



Short Stops

Snow day plans

Plan ahead for school closings and delays because of bad weather. Sign up to receive email, phone, or text alerts from the school, or check the school website. If needed, make arrangements with friends or family who can watch your child during a delay or closing.

Go-get-'em goals

Your middle schooler can make the most of the new semester by setting specific goals for each class. *Examples:* "I will improve my math grade." "I will fill out my reading log every night." Encourage him to write his goals inside the cover of his planner or binders.

Curse words: Not cool

Today's "plugged-in" tweens may get used to hearing and reading foul language and decide it's no big deal. Explain to your middle grader that cursing can make a bad impression on teachers, coaches, and even friends. Suggest that she substitute words like "ugh" or "darn" instead.

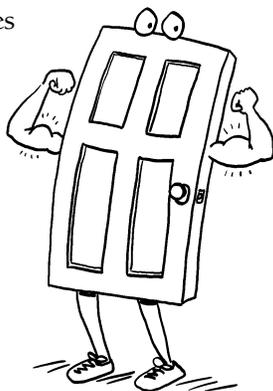
Worth quoting

"If you want to lift yourself up, lift up someone else." *Booker T. Washington*

Just for fun

Q: What gives you the strength to walk through walls?

A: A door.



The power to stop bullying

Bullying typically peaks in the middle grades, as tweens try to figure out where they fit in with their peers. These ideas will help your middle schooler know what bullying can look like—and learn how to be a part of the solution.



Recognize

Ask your child if he has seen bullying at school. Discuss how bullying comes in many forms, including spreading rumors, making threats, or leaving someone out on purpose. Even if your tween hasn't seen anyone trip or punch a fellow student, he might realize that the kid who is frequently called names or whispered about is being bullied.

Stand up

Children who are bullied need to know they have someone on their side. If your middle grader witnesses bullying, he can calmly step in by saying something like "That's not funny" or "You're being mean." Or he might ignore the bully and address

the target: "Let's sit at another table" or "I think your shoes are cool."

Report

Tweens may be afraid that bullying will get worse if they tell an adult. But explain that school staff can often resolve an issue without revealing who reported it. For example, if your child sees a kid knock papers out of someone's hands on the bus, he could alert the driver. At school, he can privately tell a teacher or the principal about bullying—and encourage other students to do so. 👍

Better public speaking

Public speaking is part of school life, from giving class presentations to leading team meetings. Here are ways your tween can boost her skills and confidence.

Find an audience. Practicing will calm her nerves. She might give her speech in front of a mirror, present it to family members, or even use a pet as her audience.



Get rid of "extras." Pesky filler words such as *like* and *um* can slip into your tween's sentences without her realizing it. Suggest that she record her speech and play it back, making a tally mark each time she hears an unnecessary word. Then, she could focus on reducing the number of marks each time she practices. 👍

No problem!

When your tween has a problem, how she handles it can determine whether she overcomes it or remains stuck. Help her see problems as opportunities in disguise with these steps.

1. Put it in perspective. Knowing that problems are a normal part of life may keep your middle grader from feeling stressed out by them. Share a similar problem you had at her age (forgetting about a big test) or recently (a disagreement with a friend). Then, explain how you resolved it.



2. Consider options. Encourage your tween to investigate solutions instead of ignoring a problem. Say she loses a library book. She might call the library rather than letting fines pile up. She may be surprised to find they will give her an extension to look for the book—or that the cost of replacing it is less than she thought.

3. Reframe the situation. Putting a positive spin on a problem will help her solve it. Instead of thinking, “I hate it when Crystal cancels our plans,” she could tell herself, “Now I’ve got time to finish that book I’m in the middle of.” 👍



Q & A Keep a learning journal

Q My older daughter recently mentioned she’s keeping a “learning diary” for her college classes. Is that something that could help my middle schooler?

A A learning diary is simply a place for students to reflect on their studies. Keeping one is a great way for your tween to think more about what she learns.



Suggest that your middle grader get a notebook she likes and label each entry with the class and date. She might write about topics that interest her, like how a novel she read in English helped her understand an important period in history. She could also record questions and ideas to investigate, such as a science experiment to try.

Encourage your girls to share their journals from time to time—your younger daughter will get a glimpse of what goes on in college! 👍

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Parent to Parent Connect without electronics

My son Eli got in the habit of playing video games the minute he got home from school. When I tried to talk to him, his eyes stayed glued to the screen, and he barely responded.

So I made a new rule: no screens for the first hour after we all get home from school and work. That way, we can reconnect and talk about our day. Sometimes we play a quick card game or tell jokes before I start dinner and Eli does homework.

Next, we’re going to try something “radical”—an entire device-free evening. If we need the tablet or computer for homework or our jobs, that’s okay. But “recreational use” is off-limits for that night. I hope Eli will see that family comes first—and that it’s possible to survive for a few hours without electronics. 👍



Community service for tweens

Being involved in the community can teach your middle grader compassion for others and give him a sense of belonging. Consider these tips:

■ Start by volunteering together. Community centers, places of worship, and your local United Way can suggest family-friendly opportunities. You and your child might sort donated clothing for a homeless shelter or bake cookies for a charity bake sale.

■ When your middle grader is ready to volunteer on his own, he could ask his

school counselor about options. Perhaps he’ll be paired with a student who has special needs so they can read together in the school library. Or he may join in a park or stream cleanup day.

Tip: Encourage your tween to keep a record of his volunteer experience that includes supervisors’ contact information and his dates of service. This will come in handy when he applies for jobs or programs in high school. 👍



Reading Connection

INTERMEDIATE EDITION

Working Together for Learning Success

January 2018

East End Intermediate School
Jayme Steinbeck, Principal



Book Picks

■ *Martin Luther King Jr.: 10 Days* (David Colbert)

Your child can read about some of the most significant days in the life of the civil rights leader. This biography describes the day King launched a bus boycott, the day he gave his legendary “I Have a Dream” speech, and more.



■ *The League of Unexceptional Children* (Gitty Daneshvari)

The heroes in this story are just average kids. In fact, being ordinary is why the government recruited them to be spies. Their mission: Fix the country’s biggest security breach ever and locate a missing vice president! The first book in the League of Unexceptional Children series.

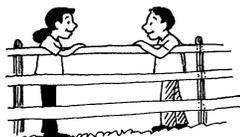
■ *Puppet Mania!* (John Kennedy)

In this how-to book, a professional puppeteer shares his secrets for creating puppets. The text provides step-by-step instructions for 13 puppets, such as a “bottle bug” and a “spoon chicken.” Your youngster will also find ideas for making puppets move and talk.



■ *Return to Sender* (Julia Alvarez)

A Vermont farmer hires migrant workers to save his farm after he’s injured in a tractor accident. This brings together Tyler and Mari, two 11-year-olds from very different worlds who quickly become friends. A story about cultural understanding. (Also available in Spanish.)



Report-writing tips

A good report is well researched, interesting, and factual. Whether your child is asked to write about an animal, a famous person, or a historic event, here is advice to help her do her best.

Be curious

Curiosity can motivate your youngster to investigate deeper, making her report better. Talk to her about her topic (say, pandas), and encourage her to list questions. *Examples:* “Where do pandas live?” “What do they eat?” As she reads books and websites, she’ll probably become even more curious. For instance, she may wonder why pandas eat bamboo if it’s hard for them to digest and not very nutritious.

Keep the audience interested

Inspiring quotes, surprising statistics, and “little-known” facts can keep readers intrigued. For a report on an inventor, your child might “grab” her audience by starting with a quote. If she’s allowed to include graphics, maybe she’ll draw a



diagram of one of the person’s inventions and label its parts.

Check the facts

Encourage your youngster to verify each fact in her report by checking at least two trustworthy sources. These usually include library books with recent copyright dates and websites of public libraries, schools, universities, and museums. If she’s not sure whether a source is reputable, she could ask her teacher or school librarian. ■

Long reading assignments made easier

As your youngster gets older, he’ll be asked to read longer books over several days or weeks. Help him build his “reading stamina” with these ideas.

● **Mix it up.** Using different approaches can motivate your child to stick with a long assignment. He might alternate reading one page silently and the next page out loud. For fiction, he could talk in the voices of the characters. If he’s reading nonfiction, let him pretend he’s narrating a documentary.

● **Break it up.** Suggest that your youngster divide a reading assignment into shorter sessions. He might read half after school and the other half before bed. Or he could set a timer to read in 20-minute segments with 5-minute breaks in between. ■



Be a word-attack whiz

Unfamiliar words don't have to stop your youngster in his tracks. Encourage him to use these strategies to figure them out as he reads.

Sound it out. Your child can try to pronounce challenging words aloud. If he says *mis-chie-vous* or *com-part-ment*, he may remember that he's heard the word used in conversation.

Cover up familiar parts. Suggest that he look for familiar prefixes and suffixes and cover them up to see what's left. For instance, he could put



his finger over *dis* in *disobey* or *ize* in *generalize*. Isolating *obey* or *general* may help him read the word.

Notice roots. A tricky word might have a root that he knows. If your child is confused by *aquanaut*, perhaps he'll think, "Aqua has to do with water. Maybe an aquanaut explores the ocean like astronauts explore space."

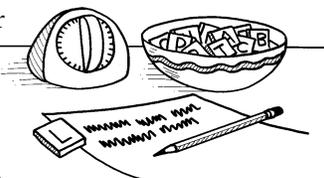
Use context. Suggest that your youngster skip a word he doesn't know and continue reading to the end of the sentence or paragraph. ("The *frigid* weather made Jack want to stay inside by the fireplace.") The meaning of the passage may make the word clear. ("*Frigid* must mean very cold.")



Fun with Words Ahh, alliteration!

"Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" is a fun example of alliteration—where two or more words start with the same sound. Play the following game to let your youngster explore this writing technique.

1. Have your child put magnetic letters or letter tiles in a bowl. (Leave out Q, X, Y, and Z.)



2. Your youngster can pull a letter out of the bowl and set a timer for 3 minutes.

3. Each player writes the longest possible sentence using only words beginning with that letter. Sentences may be silly, but they should make sense. For L, your child might write, "Laura Llama licked lovely lavender lollipops."

4. When time's up, read your sentences aloud. Award one point for each word that begins with the chosen letter. After three rounds, the highest score wins.

Parent 2 Parent Reading around town

My daughter Gabriella and I recently found a way to learn new facts about our town.

It started when we spotted a historical marker during a walk and realized that one of Gabby's favorite authors once lived nearby. Gabby learned that the writer arrived with her family in a covered wagon and wrote several books here. And I learned that this was a good opportunity for my daughter to read for information!

Now we point out all kinds of signs when we're out. Gabby read a plaque on a building and discovered that our town was once known for hat-making. We've also enjoyed reading the map at the commuter rail station, which describes landmarks along the train route—apparently there's an ice-cream factory three stops ahead. We plan to hop aboard soon and look for more things to read along the way!



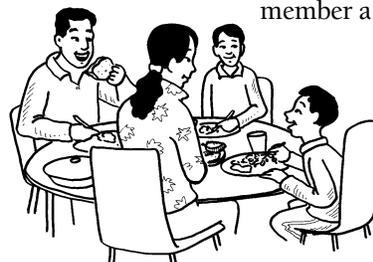
Q&A Family discussions for everyone

Q My older son loves chatting at the dinner table, but my younger one doesn't join in very often. Any ideas on how I can balance out the conversation?

A Since good communication involves listening and speaking, your younger child benefits from hearing his older brother talk. But you can encourage him to speak, too, with these suggestions.

Try asking a "Question of the Day." It could be funny ("If you were an amusement park ride, which one would you be?") or straightforward ("What is your favorite family tradition?"). Then, go around the table to give each family member a chance to answer.

Another idea: Before dinner, ask each child what he'd like to discuss during the meal. Your younger son may be excited to participate in a conversation if it's on a topic he suggested.



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Math+Science Connection

Intermediate Edition

Building Understanding and Excitement for Children

January 2018

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Jayme Steinbeck, Principal



INFO BITS

Are you a square?

Have your child stand with his arms stretched out to the sides. Measure his height and his arm span (from fingertip to fingertip). If they're about the same, he's a square! Then, let him measure other family members. Who is closest to a square in your family?



Stronger muscles

Why is it important to exercise our muscles? Ask your youngster to crumple one sheet of paper into a small ball with one hand. How do her hand and arm muscles feel? Then, she should crumple five more sheets, one at a time. How are her muscles feeling now? Explain that the more paper she crumples, the harder her muscles have to work—and the stronger they become.

Book picks

▣ *Edgar Allan Poe's Pie: Math Puzzlers in Classic Poems* (J. Patrick Lewis) is a delightful twist on poetry that will challenge your youngster to solve math riddles.

▣ Imagine going to Mars! Your child can do that and more by learning how humans would prepare for a voyage to the red planet in *Mission: Mars* (Pascal Lee).

Just for fun

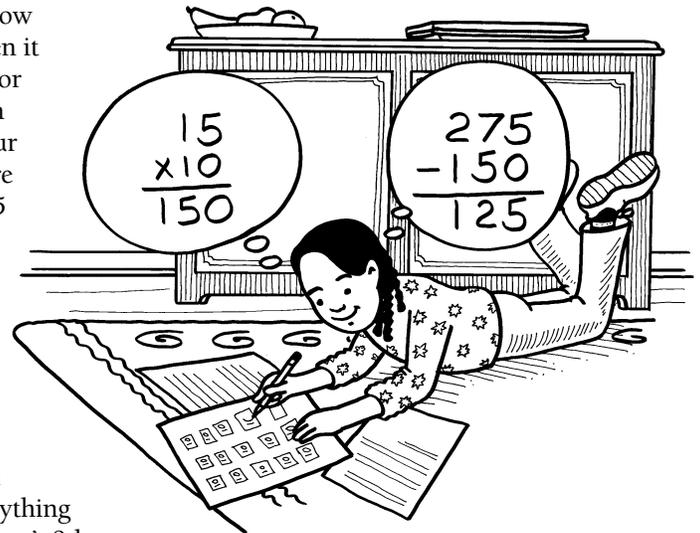
Q: What says "Zzub, zzub"?

A: A bee flying backward!



Wonderful word problems

"We got 2 inches of snow per hour for 6 hours. Then it snowed 1 inch per hour for 3 more hours. How much snow fell altogether?" Your youngster can easily figure out the snowy answer (15 inches!) using word problem strategies like these.



Spot important words

Encourage your child to underline information she needs to solve a word problem and cross out anything irrelevant. *Example:* "At Sara's 9th birthday party, there were 4 bunches of 4 balloons. Unfortunately, 2 balloons floated away, 1 purple and 1 green. How many were left?" She'd underline "4 bunches of 4" (multiply 4×4) and "2 floated away" (subtract 2). So $(4 \times 4) - 2 = 14$ balloons. On the other hand, it doesn't matter—math-wise—how old Sara is or what color the lost balloons are.

Sketch it out

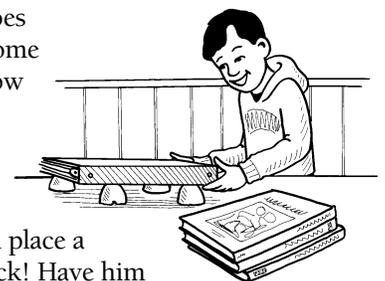
Your youngster can draw her thinking to decide how to approach a word problem. *Example:* "A school has 275 students and 15 classes, with 10 girls per class. How many boys are in the school?" She could draw 15 boxes (classrooms) and write 10 in each to represent 10 girls. She'll see that she needs to multiply to find the number of girls ($15 \times 10 = 150$) and subtract her answer from the total number of students to determine the number of boys ($275 - 150 = 125$). ▣

Super-strong eggs

Eggs don't crack when hens sit on them. Does your child know why? The secret lies in the dome shape of the eggs, and this experiment will show him just how strong eggshells are.

Break two eggs in half (perhaps make scrambled eggs with the insides), and rinse the shells. Let your youngster set the four eggshell halves on a table, dome sides up, then place a notebook on top of them. The shells won't crack! Have him predict how many books they'll hold before they crack and then stack books on top, one at a time. How close does his prediction come?

The dome shape distributes the weight evenly all around the sides of the egg, making it easier for the shell to support the load. ▣



X and Y mark the spot!

With this activity, your youngster can use x and y coordinates to find hidden “treasure.”

1. Give each player a sheet of graph paper. Starting near the bottom left of your page, number the horizontal lines up the left side 0, 1, 2, and so on up to 20. This is your *y*-axis. Beginning at the same 0, number the vertical lines across the bottom to 20—this is your *x*-axis.



2. Each of you secretly picks one number from your *x*-axis and one from your *y*-axis and draws a tiny treasure (perhaps a star or a heart) on the intersection of those lines. So if your child chose 3 from the *x*-axis and 4 from the *y*-axis, his treasure’s *coordinates* are (3, 4).

3. Give directions that let the other players plot your coordinates on their grids. Your youngster might tell you to start at (3, 2) and move up 2 spaces. Or he could have you begin at (8, 4) and move left 5 spaces.

4. Continue until all the treasures have been located. Add new treasures, and play again. 🎲



SCIENCE LAB DIY frost

When it’s cold outside, your youngster might see frost on the windows or grass. Using a few household items, she can make her own frost and understand how it forms.

You’ll need:
empty can (rinsed, label removed), ice, salt, tablespoon

Here’s how:
Have your child fill the can half full of ice, then add 4 tbsp. salt, and stir 30 seconds. She can set the can aside and check it after 10–15 minutes.

What happens? Frost will form on the outside of the can up to the level of the ice.

Why? Salt lowers the melting point of ice, which means the salt and ice together make the outside of the can very cold—below the freezing point of water. Water vapor in the air settles (or *condenses*) on cold surfaces. So when the water vapor condenses on the can, it freezes into tiny pieces of ice, or frost. 🧊



MATH CORNER Measurement relay race

Ruler, yardstick, or measuring tape? Knowing which tool to choose is the first step in measuring accurately. Your youngster and his friends can practice with this cooperative relay race.

Have the children place measurement tools at one side of a room. On separate slips of paper, let them write different things to be measured (circumference of your head, height of the refrigerator, length of a house key). Put the slips in a bowl on the opposite side of the room.

Take turns drawing a slip, running to grab the tool that would be best for measuring the item, and racing to measure it. Your child might choose a measuring tape for his friend’s head because the tape can bend. Another player might pick a ruler for a small key or a yardstick for a larger item like the fridge.

After they’ve used all the slips, they could come up with new items to measure and play again. 🎲



PARENT TO PARENT Let’s see your work

My daughter Amy would sometimes lose points on math assignments because she forgot to show her work. She said she didn’t understand why she had to write down all the steps if she could do them in her head.

I asked her to show me a problem that she didn’t show her work on and got wrong. I told her I bet she’d find her mistake if she wrote out

each step. She quickly noticed that she had made a simple computation error in the first step of a two-digit multiplication problem, which threw off the other steps. She said it was no wonder her teacher thought she needed extra help with multiplication. In reality, she had just made a careless error.

Now Amy shows her work most of the time, and she’s proud that her math grades are improving. 🎲



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Nutrition Nuggets

Food and Fitness for a Healthy Child

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BEST BITES

Junior chef

Get your child excited about helping in the kitchen by letting her dress the part. Find a large white button-down shirt she can wear like a chef's outfit. Have her write her name on a mailing label ("Chef Suzy") and stick it on. Hand her a colorful spatula, and enjoy cooking together.



Swap parsnips for potatoes

Make "french fries" from parsnips, a root vegetable that's high in fiber and folate. Peel 2 lbs. parsnips, and cut into thick strips. Toss with 2 tbsp. olive oil, $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. salt, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. pepper. Place on a baking sheet, and bake 10 minutes at 450°. Flip, and roast 10 minutes more.

DID YOU KNOW?

Swimming builds endurance, strengthens all muscle groups, and is easy on joints and bones. Encourage your youngster to swim year-round with trips to an indoor community pool. He might take swim lessons or sign up for a winter league. *Ideas:* Join him in the pool and swim together, race against each other, or play tag.

Just for fun



Q: What's green and bumpy and jumps every few seconds?

A: A pickle with hiccups.

Get healthier together!

Make eating better and getting fit a family affair this year. Being "in it together" can keep everyone motivated. Use these simple tips to get started.

Be a role model

Your youngster will copy your good and not-so-good behaviors. Telling him to eat an orange while you munch on potato chips sends a mixed message, as does using your tablet while encouraging him to go shoot baskets. A better approach? Ask him to help you cut apples for a snack, or suggest that you play basketball together.



Focus on variety

Instead of dieting or emphasizing foods to avoid, identify healthy foods to *add* to meals. Think: fresh fruits, crisp vegetables, beans and lentils, nuts, seeds, whole grains, and lean protein. This ensures you're not limiting nutrients your growing child needs. It also pushes less-nutritious foods off your plates.

Increase physical activity

Brainstorm regular family fitness ideas with your youngster, then put them on the calendar. You might try nightly after-dinner walks or Saturday morning bike rides. Move more during everyday activities, too. Park farther from your destination, take the stairs rather than the elevator, or shovel snow together. Before you know it, being more active will become a household habit. ♥

DIY supersized fun

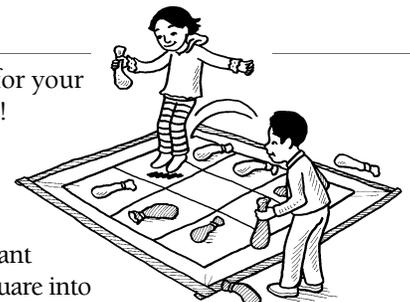
Looking for some life-size entertainment for your child? Let her create a giant tic-tac-toe board!

Materials: old sheet, marker, duct tape, 10 old socks (5 of one color and 5 of another), dry beans, rubber bands

Help your youngster measure and draw a giant square on the sheet. Draw lines dividing the square into 9 equal boxes, and tape the sheet to the floor, or set it outside.

Make beanbags by filling socks with beans and sealing them shut with rubber bands.

Each player gets 5 same-color beanbags. Now take turns hopping into a square, dropping a beanbag, and hopping out. The first to get three in a row across, down, or diagonally wins. ♥



A well-stocked kitchen

With the right ingredients on hand, you can quickly whip up nutritious dinners on busy weeknights. Plus, you'll avoid last-minute impulse purchases or costly takeout. Try these steps for shopping and planning.

1. Take inventory. Help your child list ingredients you use frequently, such as rice, pasta, shredded cheese, green beans, bread, and ground beef. Let her go through the refrigerator and pantry and cross out items you already have. *Bonus:* She'll practice reading and writing.



To make it healthier, grate zucchini and stir into the sauce. Have a can of black beans and some brown rice? Just add cooked broccoli for a healthy rice bowl. 🍷

2. Stock up. Shop together for ingredients that remain on your list. Look for healthy swaps, such as whole-wheat bread rather than white, frozen vegetables instead of canned, and extra-lean ground beef in place of regular.

3. Figure out meals. Ask your youngster to help you create nutritious menus based on what's on hand. For instance, if you've got whole-grain spaghetti and a jar of marinara sauce, there's an easy meal.

PARENT TO PARENT

What's in your smoothie?

My son Liam loves our local smoothie place, and I'm happy he's getting more fruit into his diet. But recently, I noticed a sign listing nutrition information, and I realized his favorites have a lot of sugar and fat. So I decided to start making smoothies at home in the blender.



We experiment with fruit combinations like strawberry and banana or peach and mango. Instead of flavored yogurt, which has a lot of sugar, I use plain yogurt and a little honey. Sometimes I include peanut butter or flaxseed for protein. I've even added kale and spinach so my son gets greens.

Liam enjoys our homemade smoothies, and now he's eating more fruits and vegetables—and less sugar and fat. 🍷

OUR PURPOSE

To provide busy parents with practical ways to promote healthy nutrition and physical activity for their children.

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Nutrition Nuggets™ is reviewed by a registered dietitian. Consult a physician before beginning any major change in diet or exercise.

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Boosting balance skills

Set your youngster up for success in sports and games by helping her improve her balance. Consider these fun ideas.

- **Flamingo contest:** See who can stand on one foot the longest. Switch legs, and do it again. To increase the challenge, close your eyes while balancing.
- **Cereal box challenge:** Have each person place an empty cereal box on her head. Keeping your back straight and chin up, race across the room. If you drop your box, return to the start. The first player to cross the room wins.
- **Hula hop:** Scatter a few hula-hoops on the ground a few feet from each other (or make circles with pieces of yarn). Family members can jump into each hula-hoop—without losing their balance and falling outside the hoop. Try it again, this time jumping backward. 🍷



IN THE KITCHEN

Slow-cooked meals

Tap into the power of your slow cooker with these recipes to enjoy on cold winter days.

Chicken-quinoa risotto

Place 1½ lbs. boneless chicken breasts into a slow cooker. Add 1 cup uncooked quinoa, 2 cups low-sodium chicken broth, and 2 cloves minced garlic. Cook on high 4 hours. Shred chicken, and return to slow cooker. Add 2 cups frozen peas, stir, and cook 30 minutes more.

Vegetarian "pot roast"

Chop 1 lb. mushrooms (white or portobello), 1 lb. sweet potatoes, and 2 carrots. Put in slow

cooker with 2 cups vegetable stock, 1 tbsp. tomato paste, 1 tsp. dried thyme, ¼ tsp. salt, ¼ tsp. pepper, and ½ tsp. garlic powder. Cook on low 6–8 hours.

Beef stroganoff

Fill slow cooker with 1½ lbs. lean stew meat, 1 medium onion (diced), 1 cup low-sodium beef broth, 2 tbsp. Worcestershire sauce, 2 tbsp. Dijon mustard, and ¼ tsp. each salt and pepper. Cook on low 6–8 hours. Stir in 1 cup Greek yogurt just before serving. Enjoy over whole-grain egg noodles. 🍷

