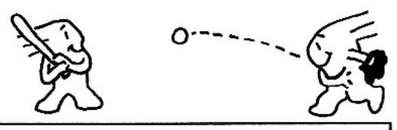
Home & School CONNECTION®

Working Together for School Success

May 2020

Alpha Public School
Kimberly A. Giles, Guidance Counselor



SHORT NOTES

Family volunteering

Children who do community service with their parents learn compassion and are more likely to volunteer as adults. To find opportunities, search online, ask neighbors, or call libraries and community centers. Or strike out on your own. *Examples:* Pick up litter at the park. Donate outgrown books to a homeless shelter.

Tick season: Beware

Warm weather means tick season. Check your youngster's head after he plays in wooded or grassy areas, and help him check his body. If you spot a tick, use tweezers to remove it right away. Call his doctor if you can't get it all or if he develops a rash, fever, or headache.

Savvy school shopping

Save money on next year's school shopping by starting early. Let your child help you clip coupons and look for sales on basics like paper and pencils. When you get her supply list, shop for everything else (like binders of a specific size) as soon as possible before the best deals sell out.

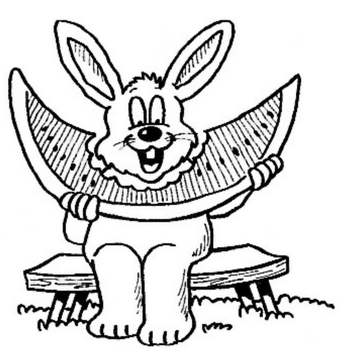
Worth quoting

"First you have to dream, and then you have to believe in your dreams. That is the only way for them to come true."
Caroll Spinney

JUST FOR FUN

Q: When do you go at red and stop at green?

A: When you're eating watermelon.



Summer brain boosters

Fill summer break with fun activities that help your youngster remember what she learned during the school year—and lead to even more learning. Playing these roles will keep her skills sharp.

Reading athlete

Suggest that your child "run" a reading marathon and chart her progress on a map. Each hour of reading equals 1 mile. If she reads a chapter book for 30 minutes after lunch and you read her a bedtime story for 15 minutes, that's 45 minutes, or $\frac{3}{4}$ mile. Can she read "26.2 miles"—or more—by the end of the summer?

Math photographer

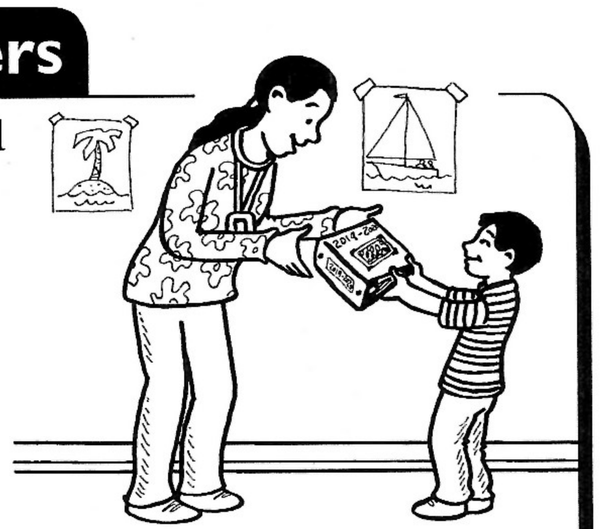
Your youngster can take photos and find the math in them. Perhaps she'll snap a shot of a quilt and tell you which shapes she sees. Or she could photograph part of a brick wall and multiply to find the number of bricks in the picture (6 rows of 8 bricks each = 48 bricks).

Backyard scientist

Let your child use science to make outdoor summer activities more fun. She might experiment to create a bubble solution that produces bigger or longer-lasting bubbles. Or maybe she'll cook s'mores in her very own solar oven. *Note:* Make sure she chooses safe experiments, and provide supervision.♥

Show appreciation for teachers

Did you know that some of the best gifts you and your child can give his teacher don't cost a thing? Consider these suggestions.



- **Send kudos.** Have him write a letter telling the teacher what he liked about school this year. He might mention an interesting history lesson or the cozy classroom writer's den. Then, you could email the principal to let her know what you appreciated about the teacher.
- **Collect memories.** Gather any photos you took during classroom or school events, and ask other parents to share theirs. Your youngster can compile them into a binder and add captions. ("Our class STEM fair had some creative inventions!")

Tip: Also use these ideas for specialists like art, music, and PE teachers.♥

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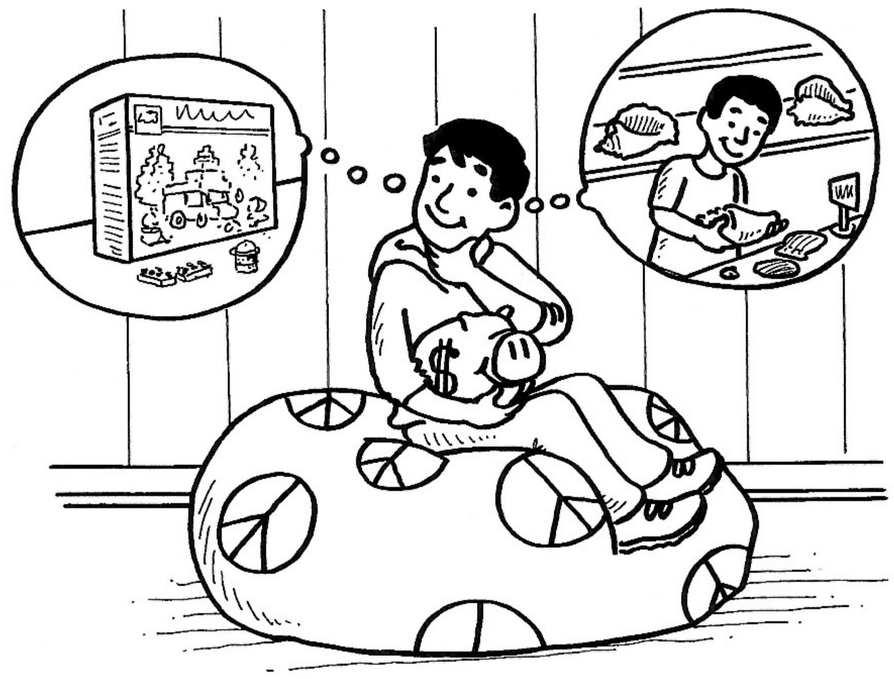
What a smart decision!

Your child is still learning the strategies it takes to make good choices. Teach him to ask himself the following questions when he's faced with a decision.



What might happen? Have your youngster imagine possible outcomes of a choice. You could ask, "What will happen if you spend your allowance on Legos?" He may say that he wouldn't have souvenir money for an upcoming trip. Or he can think to himself, "If I borrow my sister's toy without permission, what could happen?" Maybe he'll realize that would make her angry—and less apt to share with him in the future.

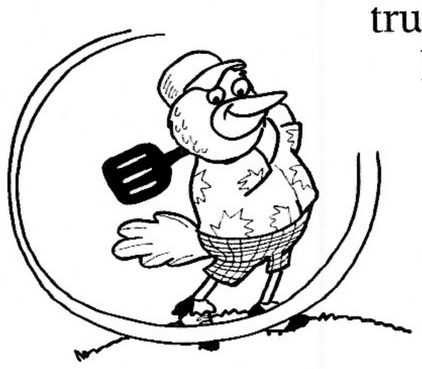
Is it right for me? Is your child considering watching a scary movie because his friend asked him to? Does he want to quit soccer because his teammate did? Suggest that he pause and think about what's right for him. This will lead to better decisions—and arm him against peer pressure, too. *Idea:* Brainstorm what to say if he's presented with an option that's not right for him. ("I like funny movies better. Want to watch one and laugh together?")♥

Outside-the-box thinking

Thinking flexibly will help your child do well in school, whether she's using a vocabulary word in different ways or coming up with a new approach to a math problem. Try these ideas to stretch her thinking.

Tell jokes and riddles

Ask your youngster, "What has four wheels and flies?" She'll need to consider that "flies" might mean "insects" or "travels fast." The answer? A garbage truck! Or try, "What has one eye but can't see?" She should think of non-living things that have an eye, such as a needle or a hurricane. Are there any other possibilities?



Find new uses for objects

Take turns choosing a household object and thinking of different ways to use it. Your child might say a spatula could be a golf club, and you could suggest using it as a flyswatter. What can she do with a game board? Perhaps she'll unfold it halfway and prop it upside-down—it's a tunnel for her toy trains.♥

OUR PURPOSE

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

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ACTIVITY CORNER

Outdoor art studio

Doing art projects outside can supercharge your youngster's creativity. Head outside together for these painting projects.

Nature prints. Have your child collect leaves, flowers, and other natural objects from the ground. She can dip them in paint and press them on paper to make colorful prints.

Rock sculptures. Suggest that your youngster brush paint on rocks. When they dry, she might stack them in different ways to create sculptures.

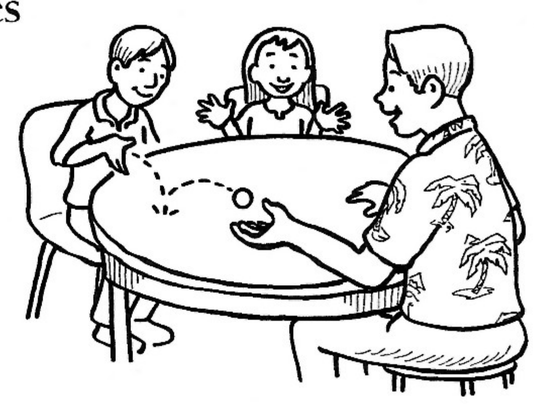
Toe painting. Instead of finger painting, your child could take off her socks and shoes and paint with her feet!♥

Q&A

The give-and-take of conversation

Q: *How can I teach my son to carry on a good conversation?*

A: Here's an easy way for your child to remember what makes a good conversation. Encourage him to think of it like Ping-Pong—the ball goes back and forth, and the game wouldn't work if one player kept the ball on his side of the net.



To help your son practice, bounce a small ball across the table to "serve" a conversation starter. ("On my way to work this morning, I saw a mother deer with her fawns.") Now he can bounce the ball back and pose a "Ping-Pong question"—one that will keep the conversation going. *Example:* "Wow, how many fawns were there?"

Go back and forth a few times. Then it's your child's turn to serve, and you ask him a question to keep the ball bouncing.♥