

Home & School

Working Together for School Success

CONNECTION®

Moorsbridge Elementary School
Mrs. Nancy Haas, Principal

SHORT NOTES

Water safety

Swimming is lots of fun and great exercise for your children. Keep it safe by making sure a responsible adult watches them the entire time they are in the water. Also, look for free or low-cost swim lessons at a community pool to help your kids be water-safe for life.

Just what I wanted

Looking for the perfect present for a teacher? A gift certificate to a bookstore or an office supply store is always welcome. Consider donating a book to the school library in the teacher's name. Or suggest that your youngster draw a picture or write a poem for her teacher.

Raising good sports

You can teach your child to be a good sport by being one yourself. When you attend a game, clap and cheer for players who try hard, even if they're on the other team. You'll help your youngster learn to be gracious to everyone in the game.

Worth quoting

"A book is like a garden carried in the pocket."

Anonymous

JUST FOR FUN

Teacher: What is an island?

Laura: A piece of land surrounded by water except on one side.

Teacher: On one side?

Laura: Yes. On top!



Summer learning

How can you keep your child learning over summer vacation? Here are some suggestions from teachers that will delight—and engage—your youngster.

Make a mailbox

Put your child's name on an empty cereal box, and drop notes in daily. Encourage her to send notes back to you to boost both reading and writing skills.

Do a science experiment

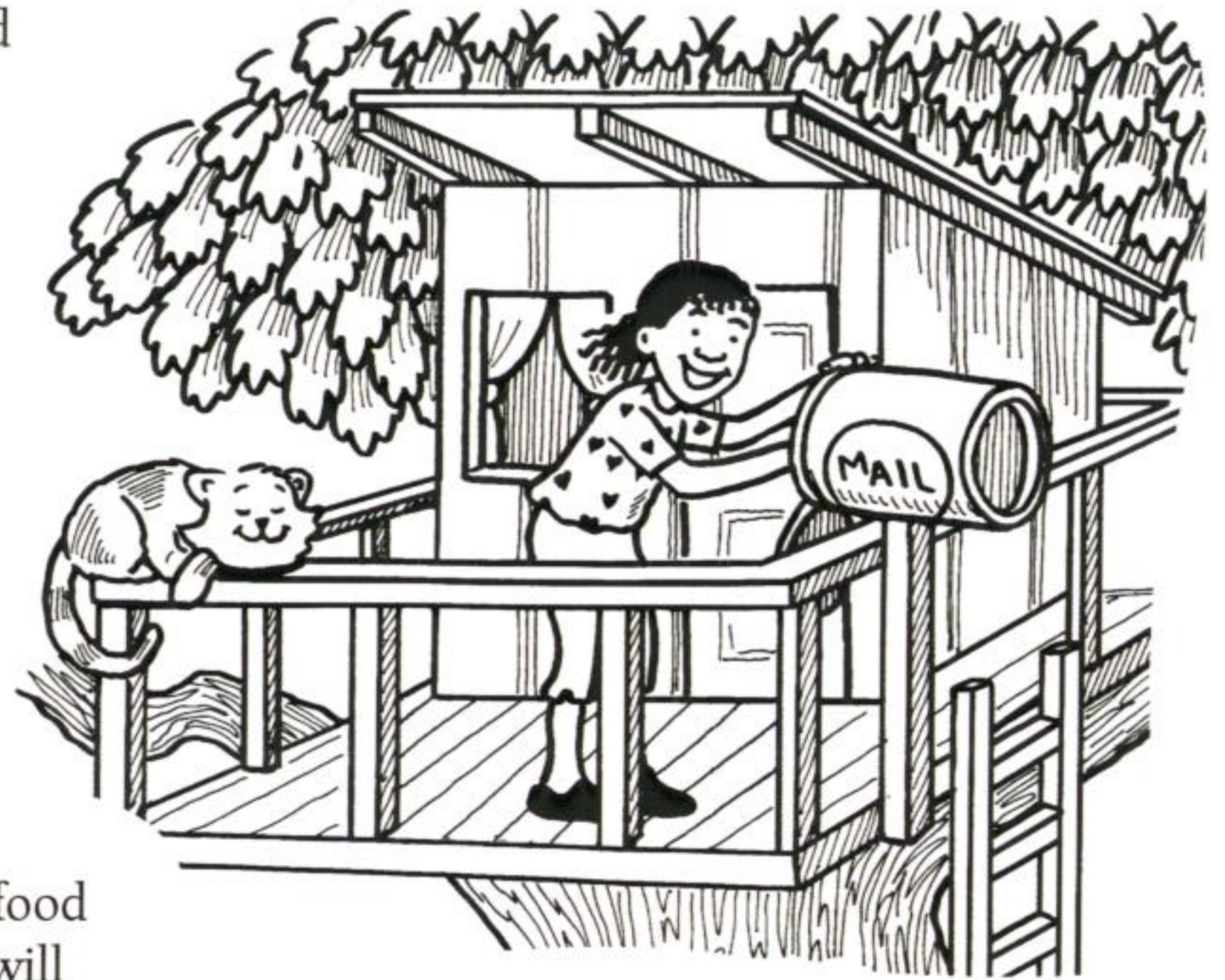
Have your youngster place a stalk of celery in water with red food coloring. Ask her to guess what will happen to the leaves. (They will turn red.) Let her make a guess (hypothesis) ahead of time on when they will change color. How close did she come?

Compare and weigh

Develop your youngster's math skills at the grocery store. She can compare different brands and sizes to find the best buys. Have her weigh fruits and vegetables and estimate their cost.

Conduct a survey

Taking family opinion polls can help with research skills. Each week, encourage your child to ask a question



("What's your favorite flavor of ice cream?"). Ask her to record the answers and report on her findings at dinner.

Practice ABC order

On a car ride, see if your youngster can spot and name objects in alphabetical order. *Example:* add, basketball hoop, church. She'll work on vocabulary, language, and observation skills.

Read every day

Visit the library for new books. Read to your child and listen to her read to you. Take books along with you on picnics and vacations. Your youngster can never read too much! ♥

Saying "I love you"

There are many great ways to tell a child, "I love you." You might:

■ Tuck a note in his lunch saying something you love about him ("Your jokes make me laugh").

■ Make his favorite meal. Serve it with an "I love you" note on his plate.



■ Listen and respond to his ideas. "You're right! We should go to the zoo again soon."

■ Send him an e-mail. "You're the best! I'm glad you're my son."

■ Leave a heart on his pillow signed, "Love, Mom."

■ Spend 10–15 minutes a day playing together—with no distractions. ♥

Music for the mind

You know music can make kids laugh, dance, and be happy. But did you know it can also help them with math, reading, and other skills?

Add music to your youngster's routine with these ideas:

♪ Encourage your child to sing and clap along to favorite music. He will pick up on rhythms and patterns—important concepts in math and reading. He can also march or dance to the beat of the music. *Note:* Some children learn best when they're moving around. Reciting math facts while marching is a fun way for them to learn.



♪ Play classical music while your youngster does math homework. This type of music can stimulate parts of the brain that help kids understand math.

♪ Listen carefully to lyrics together. Suggest that your child try to remember the words and sing them later. Learning songs by heart can strengthen his attention and memory skills.

♪ Put on fun and bouncy music when your youngster is brainstorming ideas for school assignments. Since music spurs creativity, you may find him thinking in new and different ways. ♥

PARENT TO PARENT

No time for tattling

My middle child, Andrew, used to tattle constantly on his brother and sister. It made them mad, and it annoyed me. I didn't want to ignore Andrew if the other kids were breaking rules, but I didn't want to reward him for tattling either.



Luckily, my mother-in-law came to the rescue. She told me, "Tattlers tattle because they want to feel important. See if you can find other ways to help Andrew feel important."

So I put Andrew in charge of our after-school calendar. It's

his job to review the calendar each morning and remind me who needs a ride to an activity that afternoon. He loves being my special "calendar helper." And I love that he's tattling less now that he has a better way to get my attention! ♥

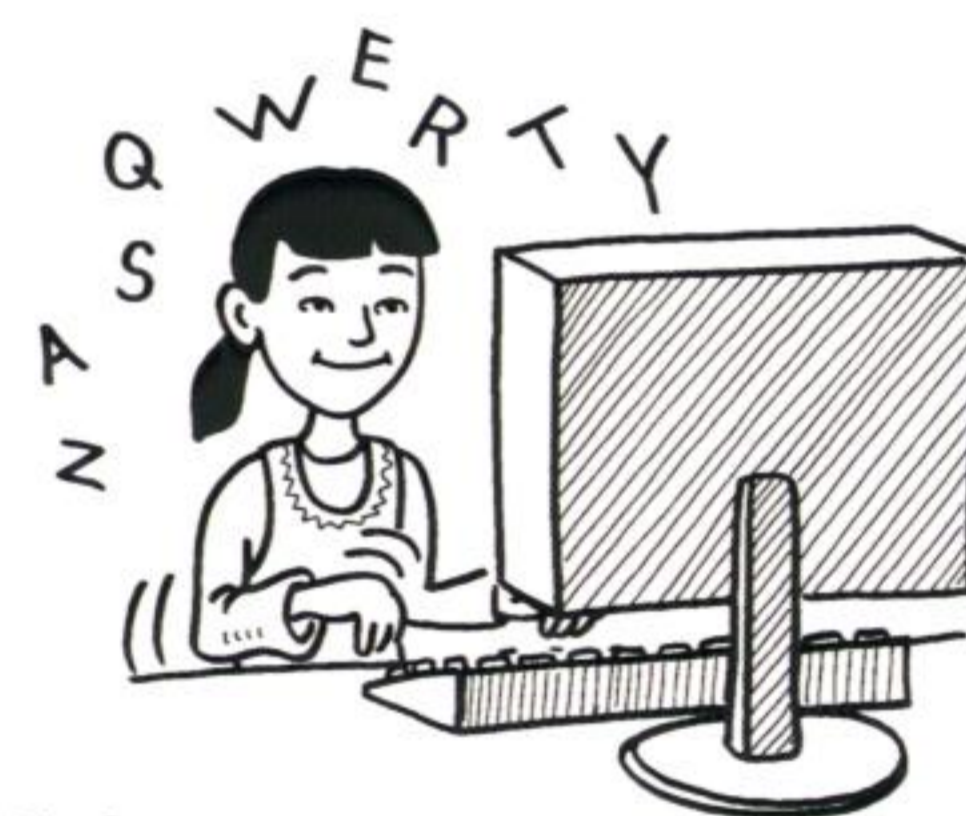
Q & A

Type "right"

Q: My daughter loves to use the computer, but her typing is all hunt-and-peck. How can I help her learn to type?

A: Your child is likely to be using computers her entire life, so it's important for her to learn keyboarding skills. You can make the process more fun with software that uses games to coach kids along. You might try *Typing Instructor for Kids* (Individual Software Inc.) or *Ten Thumbs Typing Tutor* (free trial at www.tenthumbstypingtutor.com).

As she's learning, give your daughter lots of opportunities to practice. You can dictate your grocery list to her or have her type her spelling words. She'll be happy to see that once she can type without looking, she'll be able to focus on her work rather than watching her fingers. ♥



Family history

Your child can learn a lot about her family by knowing the jobs that grandparents, aunts, uncles, and great-grandparents have held. Help her develop research skills—and learn about her past—by creating a family work history.

First, have your youngster call, write, or e-mail relatives to tell them about her project. She can ask them each the same questions. *Some possibilities:* What was your

first job? What year was it? How old were you? What was (or is) your main career? What has been your favorite job? Why?

Then, help her write out each relative's work story. She can arrange them in order from the oldest living relative down to you. Let her make copies at the library to share with everyone she interviewed. Her document is sure to become a treasured family heirloom. ♥



OUR PURPOSE

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

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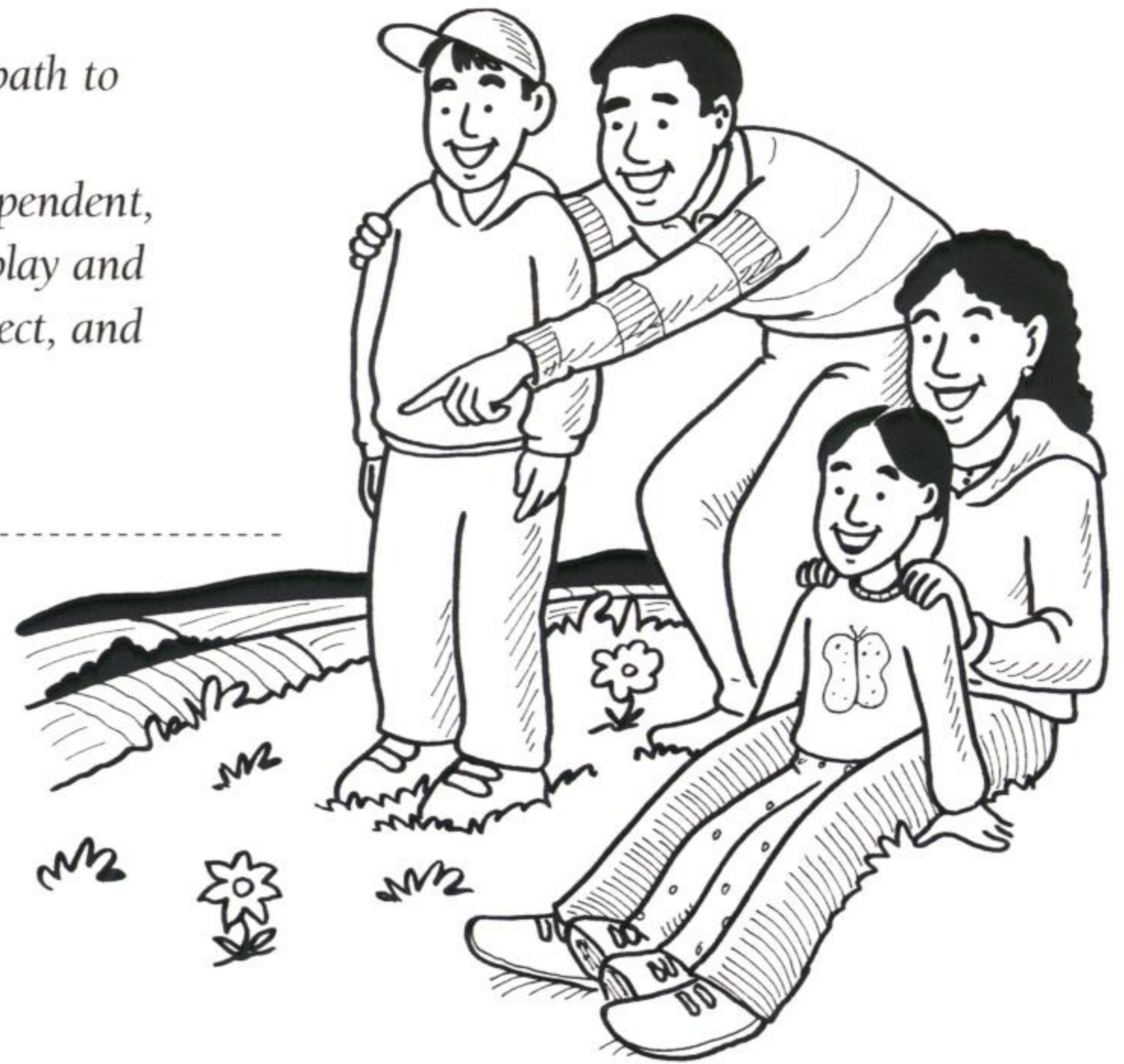
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The Road to Parenting Success

Do you wish you had a map that could help you navigate the path to raising your child?

As your youngster grows, he will struggle to become more independent, handle peer pressure from friends, and balance schoolwork with play and other activities. By setting limits, teaching responsibility and respect, and providing motivation, you can help him stay on the right road.

Here are some ideas to guide you.



Set limits

★ Decide what limits are important to your family, and pick a few that you'll be able to stick to. To teach respect for privacy, for example, ask your youngster to knock before opening a closed door. Try to keep rules short and doable for young ones. If there are too many restrictions, your child will have trouble remembering them, which may lead to frustration and acting out.



★ Work with your youngster to establish limits. Although wearing a seat belt is not open to discussion, the amount of time your child spends playing computer games each week might be worked out together.

★ Avoid confrontations whenever possible. For instance, if you buy only milk and 100% juice, your youngster won't fight to drink soda at home. If you keep the television off during dinner every night, he won't expect to watch it.

★ Choose consequences that match the behavior. Say your child is late for school because he can't decide what to wear. Let him know you will pick out his clothing the next day.

Encourage responsibility

★ Feeling responsible will lead to responsible behavior. One way to make your youngster feel grown-up is to give her chores. Children this age can make their beds, set the table for dinner, vacuum, and do other things around the house. Keep in mind that your child's covers may not be perfectly straight and someone might be missing a spoon, but she's learning anyway!

★ Being responsible for homework is a lesson in itself. Set up routines that will help your youngster succeed. Choose a time (immediately following her after-school snack, right after dinner) and a place (at a desk in her room, at the kitchen table) for homework. *Tip:* Make it a family habit to check briefcases and backpacks before leaving the house in the morning so no one forgets anything.

★ Reward responsible behavior with more responsibility. If your child gets ready for bed without being reminded, let her read for 10 minutes longer that night.

★ Allow your youngster to experience her own consequences. She will learn the price of not being responsible if she forgets her permission slip and can't go on the school field trip.



Teach respect

★ Model respect. Let your child see you hold the door for the next person. Try not to complain about the cashier if your line at the grocery store is moving slowly.

★ Show respect for your child by talking nicely about him to others. When your spouse comes home, share your youngster's good grade on his spelling test rather than talking about how he didn't pick up his toys that day. Your child

continued

will learn that respect feels nice, and you'll also improve his self-esteem.

★ If your child is disrespectful, offer other ways of speaking or acting. Say he frequently interrupts while you're on the phone. You might teach him a signal that shows he wants to talk to you (such as raising his hand). Respect his efforts by finding a break in your conversation and listening to what he has to say.

★ Disrespect for other children can lead to bullying. If your youngster is talking to you about a classmate and calls him a name, ask why he did that. He may have heard others say similar things about the child. You can do your share to prevent bullying by helping your child see good things in a less-popular classmate (has a sense of humor, studies hard).

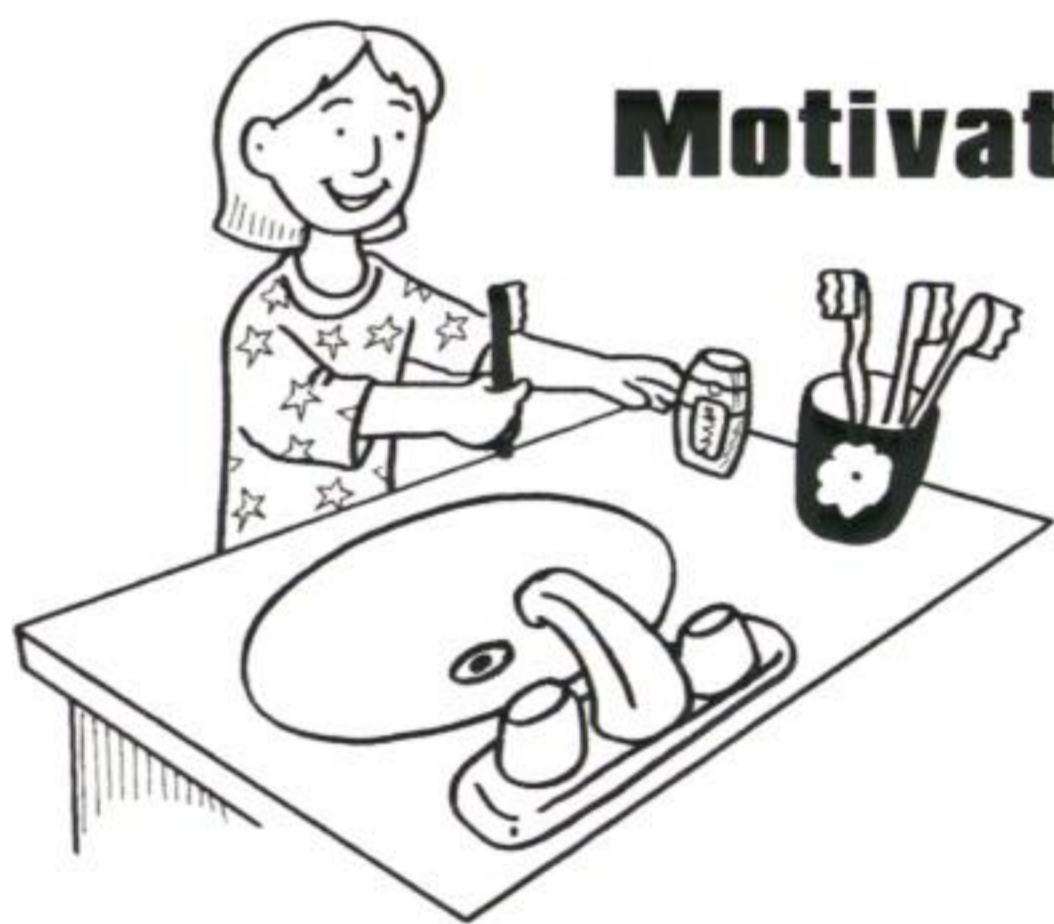


teeth by letting her choose her own toothbrush and toothpaste and putting them in a special container in the bathroom.

★ Give your youngster something special to count on, no matter how she behaves. Set aside a block of one-on-one time at least once a week. For example, when your son goes to gymnastics, take your daughter to a playground. You'll both enjoy the time together. Plus, you may discover that she's more apt to want to please you.

★ When possible, use rewards that aren't "things." You might encourage your youngster to get ready for an outing on time by telling her she'll be able to color or listen to music for a few minutes before she leaves.

★ If necessary, turn to concrete rewards. If your child is struggling to remember multiplication tables, give her a token (such as a bingo chip) for each set she masters. When she memorizes all 12 times tables, she can turn in her tokens for a treat (trip to the ice cream shop). Try to reserve these types of rewards for special circumstances so your youngster doesn't grow to depend on them. They can be helpful when something is extra hard and she is too young to understand why it's important in the long run.



Motivate thoughtfully

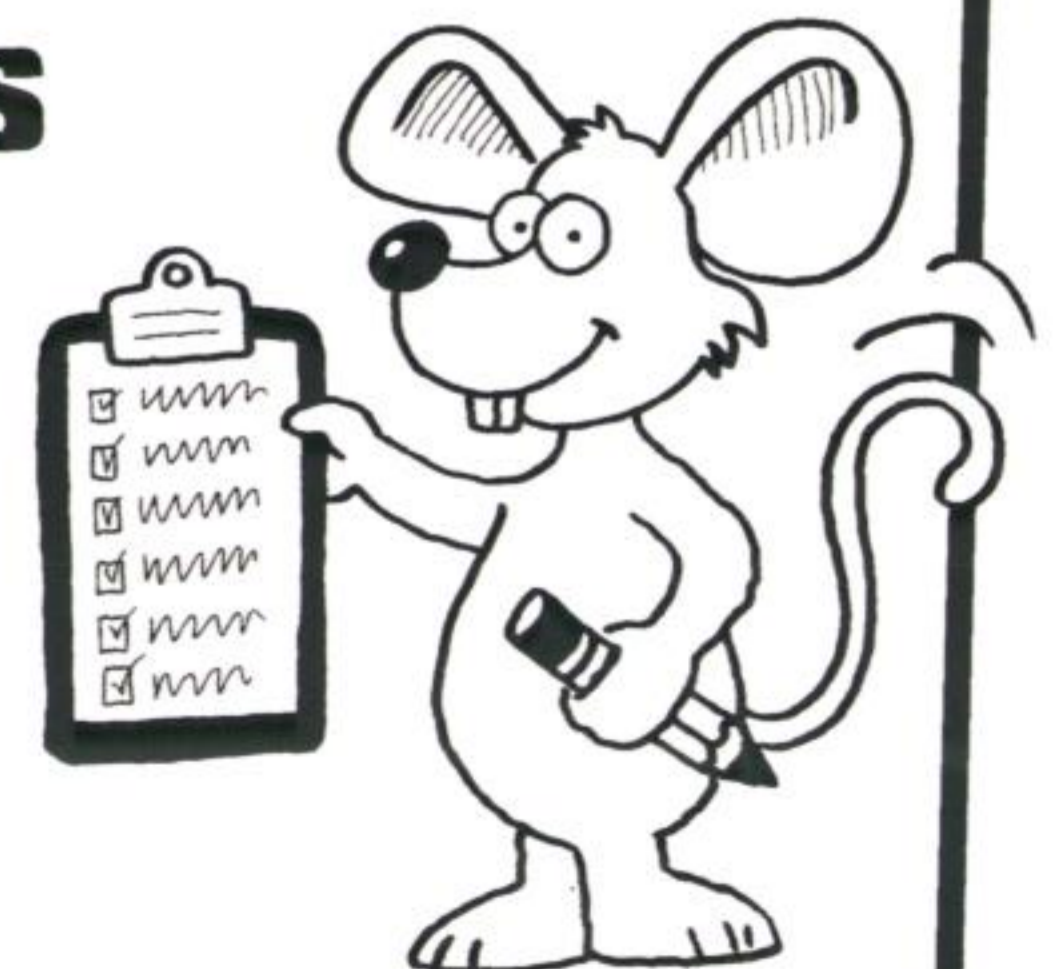
★ Set your child up for success. Encourage her to read by keeping library books next to her bed. Motivate her to brush her



Checklist for parenting success

Use this handy reminder for ways to help your youngster behave well at home and at school:

- I set up a daily routine for my child.
- I spend time with my youngster regularly.
- I let him know the kind of behavior I expect.
- I praise him whenever possible.
- I am consistent with limits and consequences.
- I talk to my youngster's teacher about his behavior at school.



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