

# Home & School CONNECTION<sup>®</sup>

Working Together for School Success

September 2016



Cedar Falls Community Schools  
Elementary Counselors Newsletter

## SHORT NOTES

### I can visualize it

Whether your child is reading or doing math, being able to “see” the material can help her understand it. For example, have her sketch a scene from a story or draw a map of the setting. Or she might use objects to solve a math problem. For  $15 \div 3$ , she could arrange 15 barrettes into 3 equal groups to find the answer (5).

### Update your information

Has your contact information changed since spring? Check that your youngster’s school has your correct home address, phone numbers, and email addresses on file. That way, teachers and staff will know the best way to reach you about school events, concerns with your child, or emergency closings.

### Trait of the week

Encourage good character all year long! Each week, vote on a trait to celebrate, such as respect, honesty, or tolerance. Ask your youngster to create a poster illustrating the trait, and hang it up. Then, family members can look for examples and jot them on the poster. At the end of the week, read the examples aloud—and vote on a new trait.

### Worth quoting

“If you can dream it, you can do it.”  
Walt Disney

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Where can you find hippos?

**A:** It depends on where you hide them!



## Launch into learning

Three...two...one...blast off! It’s a brand-new school year, and your child’s mission is to learn. With these tips, he’ll land in class ready to succeed.

### 3...Build excitement

Help your youngster get revved up about what he’ll learn this year. To find out what’s ahead, attend back-to-school night, talk to his teacher, and check the school website. Find topics you think will interest him, and read about them together in library books or online.

Look for hands-on opportunities to get him excited, such as visiting a public garden or planting seeds at home if he’s going to study plant life cycles.

### 2...Set goals

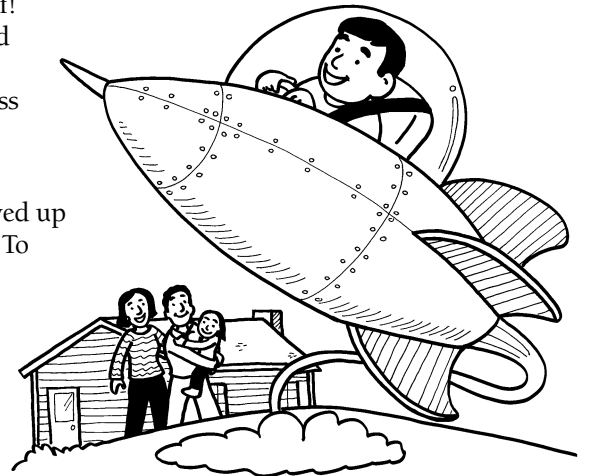
Specific, doable goals are critical to any successful mission. Let your child write goals and “due dates” on strips of construction paper (“I will finish long-term projects one day early so I have time to review them”). He can loop the strips together into a paper chain, then

## In school every day

Did you know that attending school regularly will affect how well your youngster does this year *and* in later grades? Use these suggestions to help her get an A+ in attendance.

● **Stay healthy.** Remind your child to wash her hands with soap and water before eating and after using the restroom or playing outside. Also, work with your pediatrician if your youngster has a chronic condition, such as allergies or asthma, that could cause her to miss school.

● **Address problems.** If your child wants to stay home when she’s not sick, ask why. Talk to her teacher if this happens frequently or if you suspect a bigger issue. For example, struggling with schoolwork and being bullied are two common reasons for wanting to avoid school.♥



cut off each link as he achieves the goal. With hard work, he’ll be able to say, “Mission accomplished!”

### 1...Develop routines

Your youngster will blast off ready to learn if he is well rested, well fed, and active. Set a bedtime that gives him the recommended 9–11 hours of sleep. Make sure he wakes up early enough to enjoy a healthy breakfast. Also, try to see that he gets at least an hour of physical activity a day.♥



# Building friendships

Children with friends enjoy school more, develop important social skills, and even do better academically. Here are ways to help your child build and strengthen friendships.

**Find shared interests.** Suggest that your youngster ask classmates what they do in their spare time and ask follow-up questions to show she cares. (“What’s your favorite skateboard trick?”) Then, she could talk about her own interests, whether she likes solving her Rubik’s Cube or crocheting hats. She and a classmate may discover new activities to



share—which can naturally lead to friendships.

**Be a good friend.** Talk to your child about what you value in your friendships, and ask about hers. You might say, “I can always count on Debbie at work to help me think of ideas when I’m stuck.”

Perhaps your youngster will say, “Maddie invites me to play at recess even when she’s with the older girls from her class.” She’ll realize which traits she values in a friend, such as dependability and loyalty. Discuss ways she could show those traits, too (helping friends study, making them feel included).

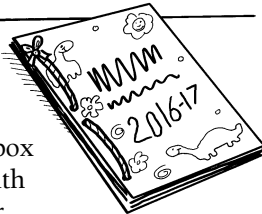
*Note:* Does your child struggle to make friends or complain she has no friends? Have her teacher recommend a classmate who may be a good match. Then, contact the other parent to arrange a get-together.♥

## ACTIVITY CORNER

### My school-year memory book

Encourage your youngster to create a personalized memory book this school year. It will give him a place to save schoolwork he’s proud of and provide a nice keepsake for both of you.

**1.** To make the front and back covers, have him cut off the large panels of a cereal box and cover them with construction paper.



**2.** Let him write his name, the year, his school, and his teacher’s name on the front. He can decorate both panels with stickers or drawings.

**3.** Hole-punch the covers, thread yarn through, and tie loosely so it’s easy to untie and add pages.

**4.** As the school year goes on, he might add graded assignments, artwork, programs from plays or concerts, and notes from teachers.

Keep his memory book in a special spot so you can both enjoy looking through it this school year—and beyond.♥



## Q & A

### A reading habit

**Q:** *This year, my son has a daily homework assignment to read for 20 minutes. What should we do to make sure this happens?*

**A:** Reading every day is one of the best ways for a child to become a strong reader, and it’s great that you’re eager to help.

Some evenings, you could invite him to read to you. He’ll practice reading, and you’ll get to hear how he’s doing. On other nights, hold family reading time where everyone quietly reads their own books, newspapers, or magazines. Your son might also enjoy reading aloud to younger siblings.

Here’s another suggestion: If you normally read him a bedtime story, try ending your nightly routine by reading one chapter aloud. Does he want to know what will happen next? He can continue reading on his own for 20 minutes to find out!♥



## PARENT TO PARENT

### Stay safe online

My daughter Sierra brought home an “online safety contract” that listed classroom rules for using the Internet. After we read it together and Sierra signed it, we decided to create our own version at home. We borrowed some ideas from the school form like:

- Keep usernames and passwords private.
- Do not post personal information online.
- Only respond to messages from people you know.



- Then, we added a few rules of our own:
- Turn on “safe mode” when using a search engine.
  - Do not create social media accounts.

Sierra helped me write out the contract, and everyone in our family signed it. We posted it by our computer as a reminder. While I still supervise my kids online, I feel better having a written agreement as an extra layer of protection.♥

## OUR PURPOSE

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

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