

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

Working Together for School Success

Baldwin County Board of Education

September 2007

## SHORT NOTES



### ABCs and 123s

When does CAT = 24?

When your youngster turns math practice into letter fun! Help her assign a number to each letter (A = 1, B = 2, and so on) and then add the letters in CAT (3 + 1 + 20 = 24). Next, she can try her name or other family members' names and other short words.

### Boys vs. girls?

As children get older, they may form "no boys" or "no girls" clubs. Try to use their awareness of the opposite sex to teach respect. For example, point out traditional and nontraditional role models (stay-at-home moms and male firefighters, female pilots and male nurses). They'll see that boys and girls can be anything they want to be.

### Family fun

Looking for a way to build family bonds? Choose one night a week to enjoy spending time together. You could listen to the radio, build a model airplane, or play a game like Yahtzee or dominoes. Any one of your ideas could become the family tradition your kids remember forever.

### Worth quoting

"Education is learning what you didn't even know you didn't know."

Daniel J. Boorstin

## JUST FOR FUN

**Q:** Why did the teacher wear sunglasses?

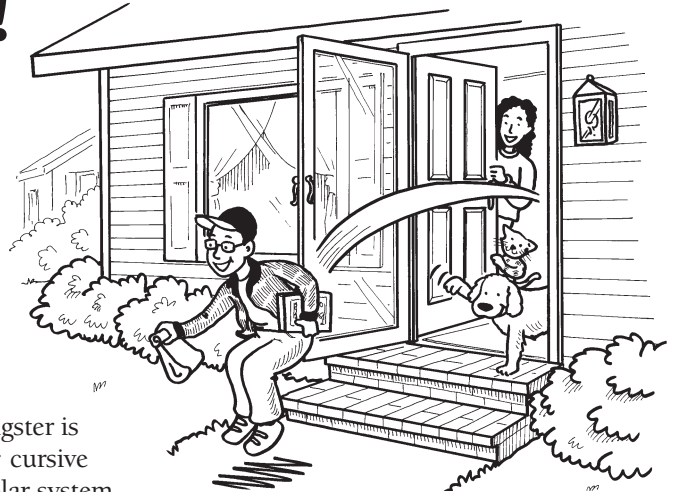
**A:** Because his students were so bright!



## Excited about back to school!

Crisp fall air. New friends. Freshly sharpened pencils and brightly colored crayons. Is your child talking about the new school year? Add to his excitement—and motivate him to learn—with these four great back-to-school ideas:

1. Find out what your youngster is learning this year. *Examples:* cursive writing, state history, the solar system. Then, get a head start. Leave a note in cursive on his bedroom door. Visit a battlefield or history museum. Read a book about the planets, or gaze at the night sky together.
2. Share your own report card or photo from the grade your child is starting. Tell him what you liked that year (a favorite book, an interesting field trip, a nice teacher). Let your youngster ask you questions about when you were in second grade.
3. Attend a play at your local theater or a nature program at the community center. You'll get your child back in the habit of sitting still and paying attention. Playing school at home is good practice, too. The "teacher" can read aloud to the "student," write out math problems, and give a spelling test.
4. What activities does your school offer? Check the Web site, or call the office. If your youngster likes to sing, he could join the chorus. A good leader might want to run for student council, while a sports lover could join



the volleyball team. Participating will help your child connect with friends and do better in school. ♥

## Beat the morning rush

A calm and happy school morning begins the night before. Go to bed knowing everything's in order with these tips:

- Check the weather forecast and help your child choose clothes, coat, and shoes.
- Have her stow her backpack by the door. Be sure she has put in homework, lunch money, and permission slips.
- Together, plan breakfast, and pack a healthy snack or lunch.
- Test your youngster for tomorrow's quiz one last time.

*Note:* In the morning, set the oven timer to go off five minutes before your child has to leave. That will be the signal to put on socks and shoes and head out the door. ♥



# How to spell f-u-n

A new school year usually means lots of spelling quizzes. Try these ideas to turn study time into fun-and-games time:

- Play “Spelling Scrabble.” Instead of dealing out the letters, put them all faceup. Take turns making your child’s spelling words on the board. Score points as you normally would in Scrabble.
- Have your youngster find her longest word. Family members can compete to make the most words using those letters.
- Give your child old newspapers and magazines. Let her cut out letters from headlines and stories and glue them on paper to “write” her words.



- Challenge your youngster to copy her list with her “other” hand. It will take extra concentration—and extra attention to the letters that make up the word—for a righty to use her left hand, or vice versa.

- Have your child tape-record herself spelling her words. She can play the tape back while looking at her list. Suggest that she check off the ones she spelled correctly and work on the others again.♥

# Getting to know you

Your child is probably excited about having a new teacher. But have you thought about how you’ll get to know the teacher? Here are some ideas for building a strong relationship from the beginning:



- ▲ Try to meet the teacher in person before or shortly after school starts. If that’s not possible, send a friendly note or e-mail. Let

her know the best time and way to reach you (daytime or evening, phone calls or e-mail).

- ▲ Attend a back-to-school night, fun fair, or other event. You’ll show the teacher—and your youngster—that you want to be involved.
- ▲ After a couple of weeks, call or write the teacher to find out how things are going. Communicating now will make it easier to talk if there’s a problem later.♥

## PARENT TO PARENT

# Chore bingo

In my house, bingo has taken on a whole new meaning. Rather than a game of chance, it’s a game of chores. Here’s how it works.

On Sundays, I give each child a bingo card filled with chores and free-time activities. My six-year-old’s jobs might include watering plants, clearing the dinner table, and feeding the fish. My 10-year-old’s chores might be to make her bed, put away the laundry, and take out the trash. Other squares on the children’s cards contain fun things like playing a game with Dad, going on a family bike ride, or inviting a friend over.

Each time my youngsters do a chore, they color in its square. If all the chore squares are filled in by the weekend, they get to do the fun activities. My kids can’t wait to finish their chores—and they’ve usually succeeded long before the weekend arrives. Now that’s a game where everyone wins!♥



## Q & A Fear not!

**Q:** My son, Devin, has been developing new fears—his latest one is storms. How can I help him feel more secure?

**A:** Fears are normal at this age, but there are ways you can help your youngster cope. Start by asking your librarian for books about storms. If Devin understands them, he probably won’t be as afraid. Also, discuss how to remain safe (stay away from trees, don’t use a corded phone or take a bath).



To keep your son occupied during a storm, try this. Look out a closed window, and count the seconds between the lightning and the thunder. He can divide by five to find out how far away the storm is (if he counts to 10, the storm is two miles away).

Another idea is to turn Devin into a weather artist. Each time it storms, let him draw pictures to put in his very own “storm folder.” He just might start looking forward to storms—and the chance to make another picture.♥

**OUR PURPOSE**

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

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