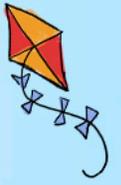




THE READING HOUSE



Dinner Notes

This simple dinnertime routine will squeeze a little more reading practice into the day without it feeling like a chore. It can also facilitate family conversation and discussions in new and positive ways.

Supplies: Coffee Can; Small Slips of Paper

Preparation: Write short messages (for younger children who are beginning to read) or quotations (for older children) on slips of paper.

Messages that promote self-esteem and family relationships can be written in short sentences with simple language for children who are learning to read. Positive quotations can be used for older children to stimulate interesting dinnertime discussions. Try some of the examples below or create unique ones to fit your family. Fold the messages and put them in the coffee can.

During dinner, pass the can around the table. Each person chooses a message from the can, reads it out loud and does what it says. If using quotations, each family member can comment on what the quote means to them. My family has had some of our best conversations as a result of this activity!

Sample messages for young children:

Give yourself a pat on the back.

Say something nice about yourself.

Give a compliment to the person sitting across from you.

What is your favorite and least favorite food on your dinner plate?

Tell a joke.

What did you learn in school/work today?

Tell the person sitting to your left that you love them.

What happened to you today that was interesting/scary/funny/sad/exciting?

Ask the person to your right how their day was.

Give each person at the table a compliment.



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Give a hug to the person on your left.

Sample messages for very young children:

Tell Mommy, "I love you."

Say hi to Daddy.

Give a hug.

Give a kiss.

Pat a back.

Smile at _____ (family member name).

Sample quotations for older children:

"Kindness is the language which the deaf can hear and the blind can see." –Mark Twain

"Before everything else, getting ready is the secret of success." –Henry Ford

"Behold the turtle. He makes progress only when he sticks his neck out." –James Bryant Conant

"Nothing great was ever achieved without enthusiasm." –Ralph Waldo Emerson

♠ Encourage older children to research and add other quotes they find interesting.

□ If your classroom students sit in groups, keep a coffee can in the middle of each table. Challenge them to put kind notes, questions to their friends, or interesting quotes in there. (Younger children can put in sight words or letters of the alphabet.) The group members can read the notes (or add to them) during transition or down time.