

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

FEBRUARY 2012

Refrigerator Poster

Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."

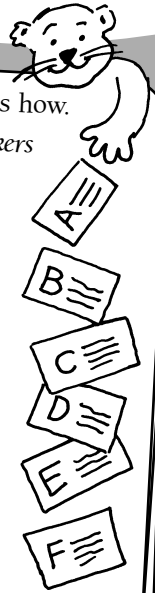
WRITING Activity Box

It's fun to write...and writing can lead to even more fun! Here's how.

Ingredients: pencil, index cards, small box or large envelope, markers or crayons

Have your youngster write each letter of the alphabet on an index card. Then, help him brainstorm an activity for each letter. *Examples:* A = make paper airplanes; B = read a book; C = call a friend. If he gets stuck, suggest that he look through the dictionary for words. He might end up with interesting activities for tough letters like Q (play a game of 20 Questions) and X (build a xylophone).

Let him decorate the outside of a small box or large envelope to hold his cards. The next time he says, "There's nothing to do," he can choose a card and do the activity.



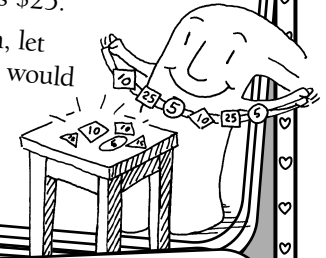
MATH Math Jewels

This colorful activity is a real "gem."

Ingredients: construction paper, scissors, tape

Pretend that you and your child own a jewelry store. You have just received a shipment of precious stones shaped like circles, squares, and triangles. Help your youngster cut several copies of each shape (about the size of a nickel) out of different-colored construction paper. Have her write a value on each one. *Examples:* circles are worth \$5; triangles \$15; squares \$25.

Ask her to design a bracelet by taping shapes together. Then, let her practice adding money by figuring out what the bracelet would cost. *Idea:* Challenge her to make a necklace that's worth a certain amount (\$95, \$150). Can she make a second necklace worth the same amount but using different links?



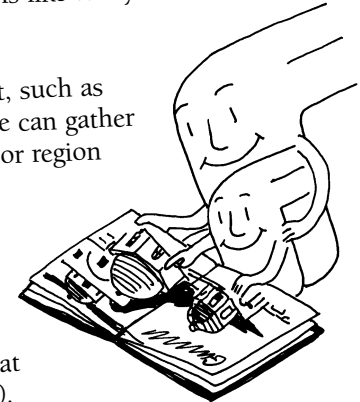
HISTORY Connecting Past and Present

When your child studies a country or region in history, it might be more interesting to him if he knows what that place is like today.

Ingredients: encyclopedia or atlas, books

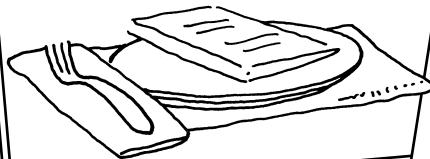
Ask him to choose a place he is learning about, such as ancient Greece. Then, head to the library so he can gather books or visit websites that show the country or region today.

Encourage your youngster to tell you what he discovers about food, language, geography, customs, and music. Together, choose an activity to do—you might cook a dish, read a folk tale, or listen to popular music from that region (see worldmusic.nationalgeographic.com).



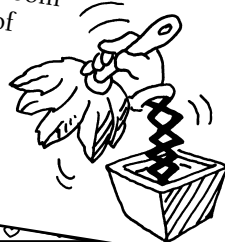
READING

Ask each family member to choose a day to bring something interesting to read at the breakfast table. Or pick a theme for each day and have everyone share a specific kind of reading material. *Examples:* Monday—jokes, Tuesday—news articles, Wednesday—poems.



SCIENCE

February 11 is Thomas Edison's birthday. He invented many things that we use today, including light-bulbs and movie cameras. Encourage your youngster to dream up inventions of her own, such as a "self-cleaning" room or a new kind of ponytail holder. She can draw a picture of her creation.



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Character Corner

READING

Forecast: Better Comprehension

Weather forecasts are full of words and symbols. Your youngster can boost her reading comprehension by mixing and matching them.

Ingredients: newspapers or Internet, scissors

Cut out the weekly weather report from the newspaper (or print it from www.weather.com). Separately, cut out the symbols that go with each day's forecast.

Then, mix them up and see if your child can match the correct symbol to the report that goes with it. She'll need to read each word carefully, since forecasts can sound similar. For example, a forecast of "partly cloudy" would go with a symbol that shows both clouds and sun. "Rain mixed with snow" should be paired with a picture of raindrops and snowflakes.



SPELLING

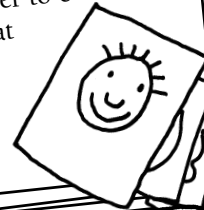
This backward spelling bee can help your youngster recognize letter sounds. Instead of spelling the words normally, players have to call out the letters in reverse order. For example, "spell" becomes "L-L-E-P-S." Your child can sound out the word backward as he spells.

L-L-E-P-S



MATH

Have your youngster see how many faces she can draw with these combinations of traits: blue or brown eyes, a smile or a frown, and black or red hair. Then, ask her to come up with an equation that explains why her number of combinations is correct ($2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$).

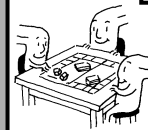


APPRECIATION

What is your youngster grateful for? Suggest that he choose something (home, ice cream, pet) and write a pretend thank-you note to it. ("Dear house, Thank you for being so warm and cozy. I especially like my favorite chair where I read books.")



SPORTSMANSHIP



Have your child write rules of good sportsmanship and post them near your family's game collection. *Examples:* "Congratulate the winner," "Finish even if you're losing," "Be patient during other players' turns." Then, play a favorite game together, and practice the rules she listed.

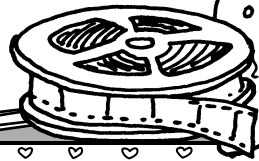
HUMOR

Help your youngster find fun in everyday situations—even when things are difficult. *Example:* Your child is frustrated because the computer froze. Say something lighthearted like, "Now you have time to jump rope while you wait for it to reboot."



TIME

The next time your child watches a movie, see if she can figure out its exact running time. She can write down what time it starts, when each commercial break begins and ends, and what time the movie is over. She'll need to compute the time from beginning to end and then add up the commercial breaks and subtract them from the total time.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

STORYTELLING

Here's a fun way for your family to tell a story. One person states a silly problem ("There was an elephant in my chair"). The next person adds a line that starts with "Fortunately" ("... he had peanuts for everyone"). The third person begins with "Unfortunately" ("... the peanuts were rotten"). Keep going until you run out of ideas.

