

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

NOVEMBER 2008

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 The Never-Ending Journal

This journal grows with each entry—and so will your child's writing skills!

Ingredients: 12 index cards, hole punch, yarn, pencil
Help your youngster make his own journal by punching a hole in the upper-left corner of each index card. Stack the cards, thread yarn through the holes, and tie it in a knot.

Then, suggest that your child come up with a topic for his journal ("Fun Days in First Grade"). Encourage him to write at least one entry each week. Examples: "We got to finger-paint in art class." "I made a new friend on the playground today."

When the journal is filled, untie the yarn and add new cards.

SCIENCE Magic Toothpick

Shh...there's real science behind this magic trick.

Ingredients: bowl, water, 5 toothpicks, dish soap

Fill a large bowl with water. Help your youngster carefully arrange four toothpicks so they float in a square in the center of the bowl. Let her gently dip the fifth toothpick in the center of the square. Nothing happens.

Next, have her dip the toothpick in dish soap and touch it again to the water in the middle of the square. Watch what happens.

Share the secret with your child: Water droplets stick together like a thin film that the toothpicks float on. Soap separates the droplets and breaks the film. When that happens, the toothpicks drift apart.

MATH Puff-Puff Golf

Play tabletop golf to help your child practice subtraction.

Ingredients: 10 quarters, masking tape, cotton balls, straws, pencil, paper
Make "holes" by placing nine quarters at random spots on a table. Stick a small piece of masking tape on each coin, and number them 1–9. Put the 10th quarter on the table to serve as a tee.

Each player starts with 50 points. On his turn, he sets a cotton ball on the tee and uses a straw to blow it to the first hole. Count how many puffs it takes, and have him subtract the number from his score. Example: $50 - 6 = 44$. Continue until each person has played all nine holes. The golfer with the most points wins.

READING

Let your child pretend to be a news reporter. Each day, she can choose one newspaper item (article, advice column) and read it into a tape recorder. At the end of one week, have her play her broadcast for the whole family. She will also keep up with current events and practice public speaking.

TIME

Ask your youngster to list five daily tasks (tying shoes, brushing teeth) and number them according to how long they take. Number 1 is the quickest, and number 5 takes the longest. Then, let him time himself doing each activity. The results will help him develop a better sense of time.

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Character Corner

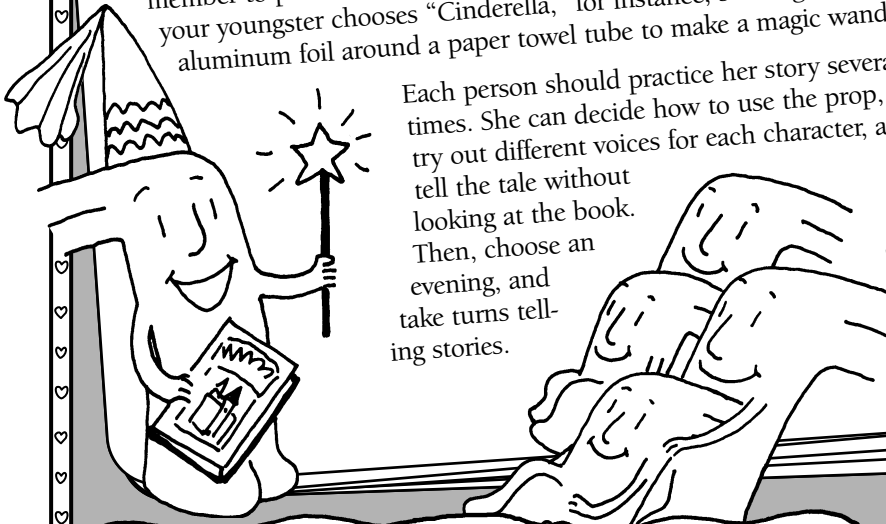
READING Story Night

Use storytelling to bring your family together and let your child practice reading with expression.

Ingredients: *fairy tale book, props*

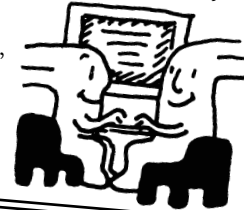
Check out a book of fairy tales from the library. Ask each family member to pick one and find or make a prop that goes with it. If your youngster chooses "Cinderella," for instance, she might wrap aluminum foil around a paper towel tube to make a magic wand.

Each person should practice her story several times. She can decide how to use the prop, try out different voices for each character, and tell the tale without looking at the book. Then, choose an evening, and take turns telling stories.



WRITING

Give your child's writing and keyboarding skills a boost by having a "silent conversation." Sit at the computer together, and take turns typing notes to each other. "What game should we play?" "I want to play Twister."



RESOURCEFULNESS

When your youngster asks for money, encourage him to think of ways to earn it on his own. He might rake leaves for a neighbor or sell old toys in a yard sale. In the process, he'll learn to be more resourceful.



APPRECIATION

Cut a star from construction paper for every member of your family. Ask your child to label each star with the person's name and something about her that's special. *Example:* "Jamie bakes the best cakes." Let your youngster put the stars on a bulletin board where everyone can see them.



HEALTH

Recycle a plastic pencil box into a first-aid kit. Your youngster can write "First Aid" on a mailing label and stick it on the lid. Help her find supplies to put inside, such as bandages, gauze, a thermometer, and tweezers. Then, let her choose a spot to keep it (bathroom, car).



CONCENTRATION

This game will help your youngster learn to concentrate in school. Sit in a circle and hold a ball. Tell about your day, and roll the ball to someone else. Keep going until everyone has had three turns. Your child will want to pay attention so he'll be ready when the ball comes his way.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

MEASUREMENT

Teach your child about volume. Have her use a ruler to measure the length, width, and depth of a shoebox. Then, she can multiply the three measurements together to figure out how many cubic inches are in the box. *Example:* 8 inches x 6 inches x 6 inches = 288 cubic inches.



PHONICS

Play this waiting game to practice letter sounds. Point to two objects that share a sound, and ask your youngster to figure out what letter they have in common. For example, *table* and *tissue* both start with T. *Variation:* Name a sound (long O) and have your child find two items that share it (*row* and *mower*).

