

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

SEPTEMBER 2008

READING Ready...Set...Read!

Hold a magazine race to help your youngster learn to find information when she reads.

Ingredients: paper, pencil, old magazines, crayons

Each player lists 10 things to find in a stack of magazines (a girl's name, a question, a foreign country). Trade lists, and try to locate each other's items. When you find one, circle it in the magazine with a crayon. The first person to complete a list wins.

For younger children: Make a list of 10 words your child is learning. You might look through her binder or storybooks for ideas. Help her spot and circle each word in a magazine.

MATH Frisbee Fun

Add math to a Frisbee game by using numbered paper plates as targets.

Ingredients: marker, 5 paper plates, hole punch, string, Frisbee

Have your child use a marker to number the plates (1, 2, 3, 4, 5). Then, punch a hole in the top of each plate, and thread a piece of string through each hole. Hang the targets from a tree branch or clothesline.

Take turns tossing the Frisbee at the plates and adding up all the numbers you hit. The player with the highest total after 10 rounds wins.

Variation: Write a math problem on each plate. After a toss, your youngster solves the problem to find his score.

VOCABULARY Word Pyramids

Build your child's vocabulary with this pyramid-shaped activity.

Ingredients: paper, pencil

Ask your youngster to write a letter of the alphabet (B) on his paper. Underneath, he should write a two-letter word starting with that letter (be). Next comes a three-letter word (big), and so on, to make a list that's shaped like a pyramid (narrow at the top, wide at the bottom). He can keep adding longer words until he can't think of any more.

Idea: Suggest that he play with a friend to see who can build the biggest pyramid. The winner chooses the next starting letter.

B
Be
Big
Barn
Black
Broken
Baskets

THINKING

Place two similar items, such as a sticker and a postage stamp, on a table. Take turns thinking of ways they're the same (square shape, sticky back) and different (straight vs. curvy edges). How many similarities and differences can you discover together?

SOCIAL STUDIES

Play music from around the world, and make up dances with your child. She'll have fun while learning about the music and languages of other countries. Ask your librarian to help you find a CD with a mix of music from many different lands, such as *World Playground* by Putumayo and *A World of Music* by Toucan Jam.

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."

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Character Corner

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WRITING The How-to Game

Silliness rules in this creative writing game!

Ingredients: paper, pencil

Ask everyone to write "How to _____ in five steps" on a sheet of paper, filling in the blank with an activity (example: wash a car). On separate pieces of paper, players write five random words (jelly, bobcat, noodle).

Swap lists, and use another player's words to write five-step instructions that match your title. Use a different word for each step.

Example: "How to wash a car in five steps" might start like this: 1. Wet car with jelly. 2. Ask the bobcat to lick it off. 3. Hose it down with a noodle...



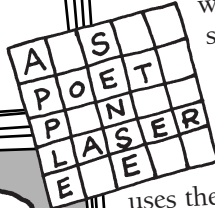
SCIENCE

Which color of clothing keeps people warmer? Your youngster can experiment to find out. Have her lay a sheet of white paper and a sheet of black paper in the sun. After 10 minutes, have her touch them to see which is warmer. Explain that dark colors absorb light (and heat), and light colors reflect it.



SPELLING

Have a spelling contest with your child. Each of you write his spelling words crossword-style on a sheet of graph paper. Put one letter per box, and try to make words cross so they share letters. The winner is the one who uses the fewest squares.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

MATH

Give your youngster a red, blue, yellow, and green crayon. Have her guess how many ways she can put four colors in order. ("Red, blue, green, yellow" and "red, green, blue, yellow" are two possibilities.) Next, she can draw different sequences of colored circles to check her guess.



FRIENDLINESS

Help your child start the school year by practicing ways to make friends.

Together, brainstorm three things to do when she meets someone new. She might introduce herself, invite the other girl to play, or offer to share a toy. Your youngster can try out her ideas with you.

FAIRNESS

Make it easier for your child to share the computer or backyard swing. Ask him to come up with a plan that gives everyone a fair chance. He might use a timer so each person gets an equal turn. A different family member could go first each day.

TEAMWORK

Teaching someone else is a great way to learn. Suggest that your youngster do homework with a classmate. For instance, they can each study half of their vocabulary words and then explain the definitions to one another. Your child will build teamwork skills, and homework will be more interesting!

READING

Encourage your child to illustrate a book at www.rif.org/readingplanet/activitylab/illustrate.msp. Let him pick a story and print it. Then, help him read it. He'll build comprehension skills as he reads each page and decides what to draw on it. When he finishes the pictures, ask him to read the story to you.

