

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

DECEMBER 2009

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."



SCIENCE Pinecone Surprise

Your child will be fascinated to see a pinecone open and close in this experiment.

Ingredients: pinecone, bowl of water, soup can

Help your youngster find a pinecone on the ground. Let him place it in a bowl, cover it with water, and weight it down with a soup can so it doesn't float. After 15 to 20 minutes, the cone will begin to close up. Once it's completely shut, have your child take it out of the water and lay it on a paper towel to dry overnight. When dry, the cone will open again.

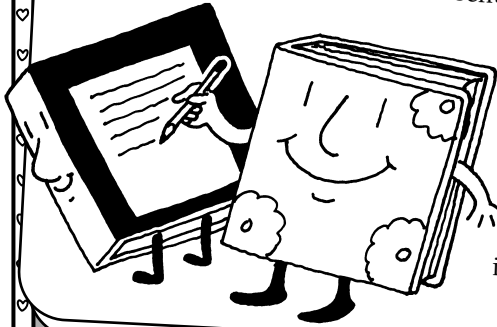
Explain that a pinecone holds the seeds of a pine tree. When it rains, the cone's scales soak up water and bend until they close—similar to the way a wooden board warps when it's wet. The closed cone protects the seeds by keeping them dry.

WRITING Design a Book Cover

Creating a book jacket is a fun way to practice writing a summary.

Ingredients: books, notebook paper, pencil, construction paper, tape, glue, crayons

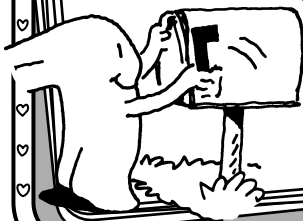
Show your youngster several book covers and talk about what she sees (pictures, story descriptions, quotes). Ask her to pick a favorite book and make a new jacket for it. Have her read the story and write a summary on notebook paper. She should write a few sentences describing the plot, the main characters, and the setting.



Next, help her cover the book with construction paper and glue her summary onto the back. On the front, have her write the title and the author's name and draw a picture to illustrate the story.

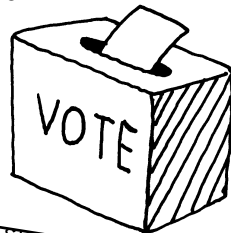
READING

Encourage your child to read about current events with this idea. Let him select articles from your newspaper and mail them to an out-of-town relative. In return, he can ask that person to mail articles from her newspaper to him. When your youngster receives them, he can read the stories aloud.



GOVERNMENT

Household elections can teach your child about democracy. Have family members vote on issues such as which vegetable to make for dinner or what show to watch. Let your youngster count the votes. Then, use the results—you'll show your child democracy in action.



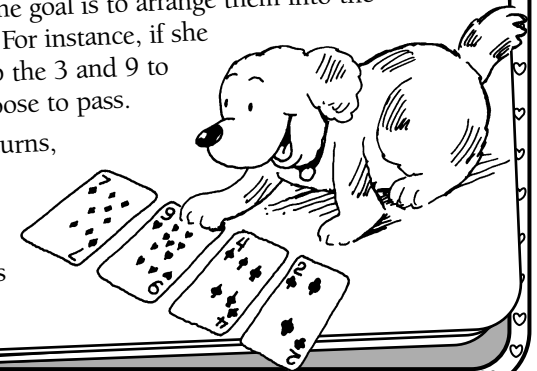
PLACE VALUE Trading Places

This card game can help your youngster understand the importance of place value.

Ingredients: deck of cards (face cards and 10s removed)

Deal all the cards equally to the players. Have each person place her cards in a stack and turn the top four cards faceup in a row. On her turn, she chooses two of her cards to trade places. The goal is to arrange them into the largest possible four-digit number. For instance, if she has 3, 2, 6, and 9, she might swap the 3 and 9 to make 9,263. A player can also choose to pass.

After each person has had three turns, the one with the largest number wins all the cards in that round. Continue until the players have used all their cards. Whoever has collected the most cards wins.



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Character Corner

READING Treasure Hunt

Send your youngster on a treasure hunt—he'll have fun while he practices reading and following directions.

Ingredients: paper, pencils, "treasures" (stickers, pennies)

Hide a small treasure for your child to find. Write directions on slips of paper and hide them around the house. Each clue should lead your youngster to the next clue and, finally, to the treasure. Get him started by giving him the first clue ("Look under the sofa").

Other clues might say: "Check under your bed." "Open your favorite book." "Look in your closet." When he finds the treasure, have him make a treasure hunt for you.

Variation: For beginning readers, draw pictures to go with the directions.



LISTENING

Help your child practice listening. Take turns reading lines of a poem in different voices. For example, you might use a high-pitched voice to say, "There was an old lady who lived in a shoe."



Have your youngster repeat the line, imitating your voice. On the next line, she might whisper her words for you to mimic.

DIVISION

Give your youngster a snack of small pieces (dry cereal, grapes). Ask him to cut a paper towel into fourths, count his snack, and divide it evenly among the four squares. For example, if he has 16 grapes, he'll put 4 on each square. Have him say the problem he creates ($16 \div 4 = 4$).



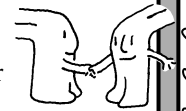
MANNERS

Ask your child to make a list of polite words (thank you, excuse me). Then, have him write down polite actions (knock before opening a door, wait your turn in conversation). He'll see that he can show good manners by what he says *and* does.



CONFLICT RESOLUTION

When your youngster disagrees with a sibling, have her make a case for the other side. If her sister borrows a sweater without asking, she might think, "I wasn't home, and Sarah probably thought I wouldn't mind." Considering the other person's feelings may help her feel less angry.



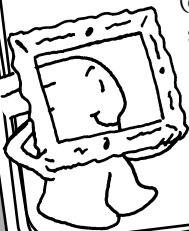
POSITIVE ATTITUDE

Help your child find something to be happy about every day. At dinner, let each person share one thing he liked about his day. *Examples:* "I finished a big project at work." "I loved my macaroni and cheese for lunch!"



ART

Explain to your child that artists use different styles. For example, some draw pictures using tiny dots (pointillism). Others use geometric shapes (cubism). *Note:* You can show her several styles at www.nga.gov/kids. Then, take out paper and paint, markers, or crayons, and let her try the ones she likes.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

THINKING

Solving and creating word puzzles will sharpen your youngster's thinking skills. Think of a pair of rhyming words (big pig, brown town) and give your child clues to help him guess them. *Examples:* a giant hog, a dirty city. Then, he can come up with rhyming words and give you clues.

