

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

JANUARY 2009

GEOMETRY Triangle Tricks

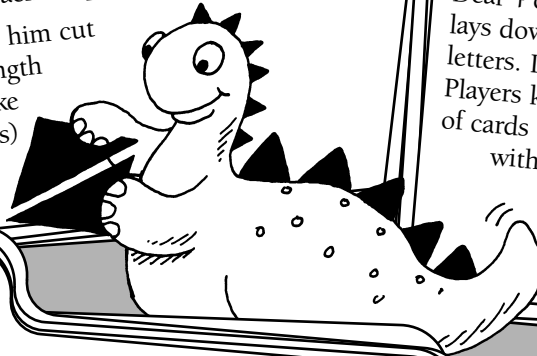
How many shapes can you make using triangles? Your youngster will learn geometry and thinking skills with this activity.

Ingredients: construction paper, scissors

Help your child cut two same-sized squares from the paper. Then, have him cut each square in half diagonally to make two triangles.

Ask him to arrange the triangles to form as many different shapes as possible. Can he make a square, a rectangle, and a diamond? *Hint:* He doesn't have to use all four triangles for each shape.

Using new sheets of paper, have him cut out four triangles with equal-length sides. Which shapes can he make now? (a large triangle, a rhombus)



SOCIAL STUDIES Help Wanted

Reading classified ads can help your child learn about jobs people do. And writing her own ad will improve her writing skills, too.

Ingredients: newspaper, pencil

Together, read several help-wanted ads in your local paper. Point out how each listing describes a job and requests specific skills.

Then, ask your youngster to brainstorm jobs she might like when she grows up (veterinarian, teacher, movie star). Help her write a pretend ad for each job. She can be serious or silly, but encourage her to make the ads sound like the ones from the newspaper. *Example:* "Actress wanted for a new movie. Must like bright lights, cameras, and costumes. Ability to sing a plus."



VOCABULARY Build a Word

Boost your youngster's vocabulary with this strategic word game.

Ingredients: 32 index cards, pencil

Write one letter of the alphabet on each of 26 index cards. Make an extra set of vowels (a, e, i, o, u, y).

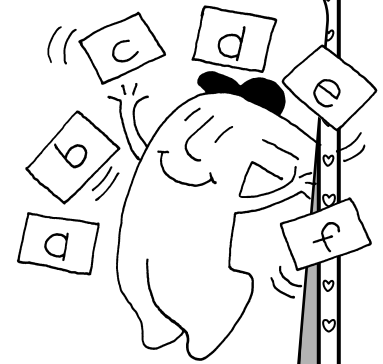
Deal 4 cards to each person. On a player's turn, he lays down cards to spell a word with two or more letters. If he can't spell a word, he draws a card. Players keep making words until someone runs out of cards or no one can make another word. The player with the fewest cards left wins.

Tip: Remind your child to conserve his vowels, since he won't be able to spell a word without one.



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."



COMPREHENSION

Look at a picture book with your child. Cover up the words, and using clues from the illustrations, take turns telling what is happening. *Examples:* "There's a barn and farm animals. The goat and cow are eating grass." Then, she'll have a better understanding of the story when she reads it.



DIVISION

Let your youngster practice math skills by designing an imaginary business, such as washing windows, and setting a price to charge. Then, have her calculate how many jobs she would need to do to earn \$10.00. For example, if she charges 50 cents per window, she'd have to wash 20 windows ($\$10.00 \div .50 = 20$).



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Character Corner

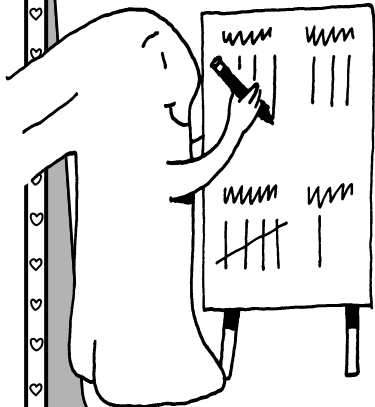
RESEARCH My Family

Your child can create a survey to practice research skills and learn about her family.

Ingredients: paper, pencils

Have your youngster write 10 statements beginning with "I" on a sheet of paper. Examples: "I like to sing." "I have never accidentally swallowed a bug." Then, she can make survey response sheets for each family member by writing 1-10 down a piece of paper.

As your child reads each statement aloud, everyone writes "Agree" or "Disagree" on their sheets. Afterward, let her collect the sheets, tally the answers, and write sentences about what the survey showed. For instance, "Three people in my family like winter. Two do not." Have her post the survey results where everyone can read them.



SPELLING

Can your youngster spell with a flashlight? He can if he uses Morse code. Visit www.learnmorsecode.com to see the dots and dashes that stand for each letter. Have your child shine the flashlight quickly for a "dot" and more slowly for a "dash." Take turns spelling words for each other to guess.



INDEPENDENCE

Motivate your child to try new things on his own. As he masters a task (tying shoes, riding a bike), let him share the news by e-mailing a friend or relative ("Dear Aunt Lucy, I make my own sandwich and pack my lunch all by myself now").

CULTURES

New Year's Day is celebrated in many ways around the world. As a family, research traditions, and choose one to try in your home. For example, read *Shante Keys and the New Year's Peas* (Gail Piernas-Davenport) and have black-eyed peas for a good-luck dinner.

MANNERS

Teach your youngster to introduce people by practicing with family members. Pretend to introduce her to someone ("Emma, this is John. John, this is Emma"). Mention an interest they share to help them start a conversation ("Emma, John enjoys hiking, too"). Then, let her make an introduction.

POETRY

A haiku is a Japanese poem with 5 syllables on line one, 7 on line two, and 5 on line three. Ask your child to sum up her day—using 17 syllables. Example: "Walked to school with Grace / Went to the computer lab / Ballet after school." She'll practice writing poetry, and you'll hear about her day!

CREATIVITY

A family photograph serves as inspiration for this collage. Help your youngster find or take a picture of a family activity, such as a birthday party. Tape the photo on a piece of paper. Around it, he can glue related items (wrapping paper scrap, ribbon, birthday candle).



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

READING

Here's an unusual reading assignment: read the phone book! Show your child how it's organized so he can learn to use it. Then, ask him to look up numbers (yours, his best friend's, his school's). You can also have him find things other than phone numbers (maps, time zones).

