

Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

MARCH 2009

Refrigerator Poster

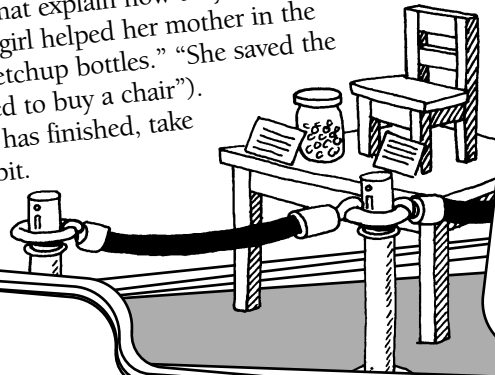
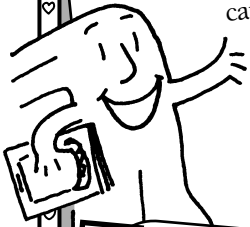
Just hang your *Recipes* poster on the refrigerator and sneak in an activity when you have a few minutes. These fun activities will help develop school success and positive behavior. Check off each box as you complete the "recipe."

READING Story Museum

Spark your child's imagination by having her create a museum based on a book.

Ingredients: book, household items, index cards, pencil
Have your youngster collect objects like those in her favorite story. A Chair for My Mother (Vera B. Williams), for instance, might inspire her to gather a ketchup bottle, a jar, coins, and a small chair.

Let her display the objects on a table or shelf. On index cards, she can write sentences that explain how they were used in the story ("The little girl helped her mother in the diner by filling ketchup bottles." "She saved the money she earned to buy a chair"). When your child has finished, take a tour of her exhibit.



SCIENCE Bubbly Leaves

Watch leaves produce oxygen with this simple experiment.

Ingredients: leaf, jar, paper, crayons
Have your youngster fill a jar with water and drop in the leaf. She should check on her experiment every 15 minutes for an hour. Each time, have her draw a picture of what she sees. (More and more tiny bubbles will form on the leaf.)

Explain that plants give off oxygen through tiny holes, called pores, in their leaves. When you place the leaf under water, the bubbles are formed as the air's released.



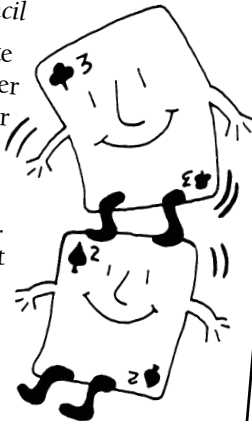
MATH Higher or Lower?

Your children can explore probability with a deck of playing cards.

Ingredients: deck of cards (face cards removed), paper, pencil
Shuffle the cards, place them facedown in a pile, and take turns drawing one card at a time. On each turn, the player guesses whether the card he draws will be higher or lower than the last one he picked.

Talk about how you can make guesses based on the value of the card you're holding (aces = 1). Example: "You drew an 8. There are seven cards lower but only two higher. So your next card will probably be lower." (If you draw the same number, return one to the bottom of the pile and draw again.)

Players score one point for each correct guess. Keep playing until there are no cards left. The player with the highest score is the winner.



WRITING

Welcome spring with an outdoor observation walk. On a piece of paper, have your child write, "I see _____."

I hear _____.

I smell _____.

I feel _____.

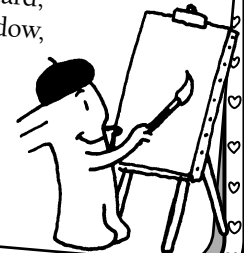
Urge her to pay attention to nature and fill in the blanks (clouds; geese; flowers; a breeze).

Honk!



CREATIVITY

March is Youth Art Month. Celebrate with your youngsters by showing them that art is everywhere. Examples: store logo, T-shirt design, greeting card, stained-glass window, flag. Have everyone choose their favorite example and create their own work of art.



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Character Corner

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POETRY Pick a Word

Your child will learn about the different parts of speech with this poetry-writing activity.

Ingredients: book of poetry, 3 small bags, pencil, magazines or newspapers, scissors, paper

Read several poems together. Ask your youngster to find the nouns, verbs, and adjectives in the lines. You can remind him that nouns are people, places, and things; verbs are action words; and adjectives are describing words.

Next, have him make up his own poem using these parts of speech. Start by letting him label a paper bag for each one. Then, have him cut out 20–30 nouns, verbs, and adjectives from old magazines or newspapers and put them in the correct bag. Finally, he can draw three words from each bag to use in writing his poem. For instance, if he picks *squirrel*, *raced*, and *shimmering*, he might write:

The gray squirrel
raced down the tree
in the shimmering rain.



Congratulations!

We finished _____ activities together on this poster.

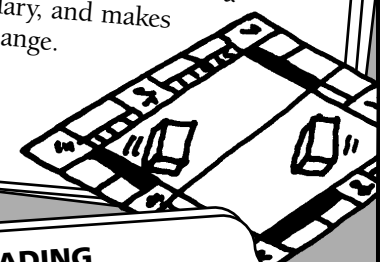
Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)



MATH

Board games that use money (Monopoly, Life) can sharpen your child's math skills. Let him be the banker. He'll get practice counting, adding, and subtracting as he collects rent, earns a salary, and makes change.



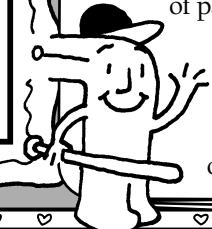
READING

Predicting story events will improve your youngster's reading comprehension. As you read aloud, ask her to guess what will happen: "I think Mari will look in the closet even though she's not supposed to." Have your child point out clues in the story (she hears a noise in the closet, she keeps looking at the door).



SOCIAL STUDIES

Could your youngster communicate with someone who doesn't speak his language? Write five sentences on a piece of paper ("What time is dinner?" "Let's go to the ball game"). Ask him to act out each one without words. He could use pictures, props, or gestures.



Character Corner

COOPERATION

Ask a librarian to help you find a book about cooperation, like *Elephant on My Roof* (Erin Harris). Have your youngster brainstorm ways your family would work together if faced with the situation in the story. ("Mom could fly a hot air balloon." "I could push the elephant into the basket.")



KINDNESS

Teach your child the old saying, "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." Then, encourage him to counter negative words with nice ones. For instance, if someone says, "I don't like Josh's shoes," he could respond with, "I think Josh tells the funniest jokes."



TRUSTWORTHINESS

Explain to your youngster that being trustworthy means others can depend on you. Ask her to list three things you can count on her to do for a week—without being asked. *Examples:* set the table, make her bed, feed the cat.



VOCABULARY

Encourage your child to stretch her vocabulary with this fun activity. One of you names a place, such as the bank. Then, take turns saying words associated with that location (money, deposit, savings, interest). The last person to think of a word chooses the next place.

