

# Recipes for Success

Practical Activities to Help Your Child Succeed

NOVEMBER 2011

## 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 My Five Senses

Help your child use his five senses to investigate where he lives and sharpen his observation skills.

**Ingredients:** paper, pencil, snack

Take a walk through your house or apartment together. Encourage your youngster to use his senses (sight, hearing, touch, smell, taste) along the way. Suggest that he cover his ears to concentrate on what he sees (striped pillow). Then, he could close his eyes to focus on what he hears (water running), feels (soft carpet), smells (vanilla potpourri), and tastes (a pretzel).

When the walk is finished, have your child write sentences to describe what he experienced. Example: "I heard music playing and felt a breeze from the fan."



### MATH Missing Numbers

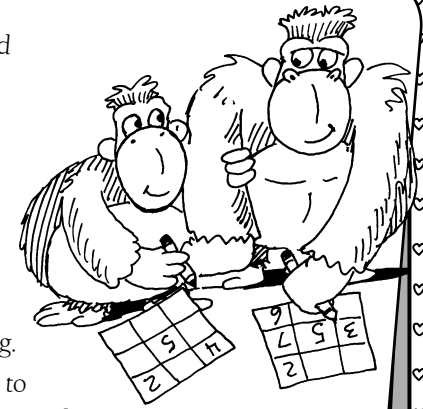
Addition practice is fun with this game.

**Ingredients:** paper, pencil

A "magic square" is a grid with three rows and three columns—each box contains a number, 1–9, and every row, column, and diagonal adds up to 15.

To play, you and your youngster make a magic square without looking at each other's papers. Then, copy your magic square onto a new sheet of paper, and leave off two or more numbers. Trade papers. Each person tries to figure out which numbers are missing and where they belong.

**Variation:** With an older child, make 5 x 5 grids to exchange. Use the numbers 1–25 so that each row, column, and diagonal adds up to 65. Erase four or more numbers for the other player to fill in.



### WRITING Create a Character

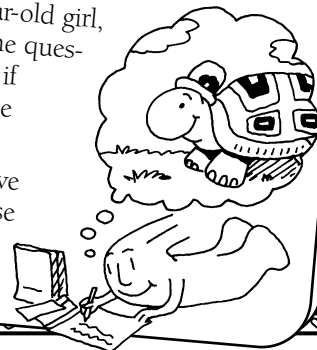
Use this game to give your youngster an interesting character to write about.

**Ingredients:** index cards, pencil, bag

Have your child write questions like these on index cards: "What is your name?" "Where do you live?" "What words describe you?" "How do you spend your free time?"

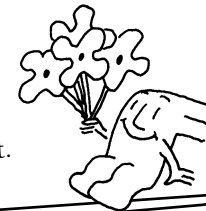
Each of you can think of a type of character (a 10-year-old girl, a fourth-grade teacher, an astronaut, a turtle). Place the questions in a bag, take turns drawing one, and answer as if you're the character—using your imagination to create details as you go.

Jot your answers on the backs of the cards. Once you've each answered all the questions, your youngster can use the details to write a story about her character or yours (or a combination of the two).



### SOCIAL STUDIES

Ask your youngster to look up your state flower in an encyclopedia and draw and color the flower on paper. Then, she can cut it out and tape it on a drinking straw and make a colorful bouquet, adding flowers from states she has visited or would like to visit.



### READING

These homemade bookmarks let your child track his reading. Have him cut a side panel from a small cardboard snack box and glue construction paper on the blank side. Each time he finishes a book, he can add the title to the strip. When it's full, it's time to start a new bookmark. Watching his bookmarks fill up will motivate him to read even more!



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## Character Corner

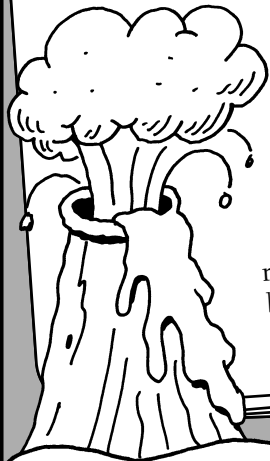
### READING Learning with Similes

Comparing new ideas with familiar ones can improve your youngster's reading comprehension.

**Ingredients:** textbook chapter or storybook, paper, pencil

Before your child reads a textbook chapter, encourage her to write this fill-in-the-blank sentence: "\_\_\_\_\_ is like \_\_\_\_\_ because \_\_\_\_\_." She can complete the sentence as she reads. For instance, if she's studying volcanoes, she might come up with "A volcano is like a whistling teapot because pressure in the earth pushes lava out like pressure in a teapot forces steam out."

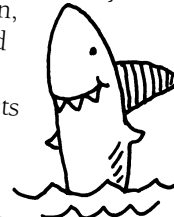
Suggest that she try the same idea while reading fiction. *Example:* "Sam is like my dad because he is always fixing things."



### LOGIC

Sharpen your youngster's thinking skills with this contest.

Name three objects that have something in common (comb, shark, person). Ask your child to guess what the trait is (they all have teeth). Then, switch roles, and let her come up with three objects for you.



### MEASUREMENT

Where could your youngster keep a pet dinosaur? That depends on how big it is! Ask her to choose a favorite dinosaur and find its length—for instance, stegosaurus (30 feet) or protoceratops (6 feet). Then, help her use a measuring tape to locate a place to fit her dinosaur (sidewalk, living room).



### Congratulations!

We finished \_\_\_\_\_ activities together on this poster.

Signed (parent or adult family member)

Signed (child)

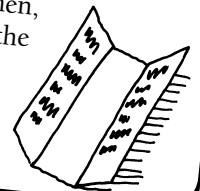
### WRITING

Your child can decorate storage containers to practice informational writing and organize supplies. For example, he might put markers in an empty oatmeal canister and make a label with instructions. *Example:* "Washable markers. Replace caps when you finish."



### SPELLING

Here's a quick strategy for learning spelling words. Have your child fold a sheet of paper into thirds and unfold it. He can copy a word into the first column and hide it by folding that flap down. Then, he should write the word in the third column and unfold the paper to check the spelling. Have him repeat this for each word.



### TOLERANCE

Help your youngster understand the qualities that make each person unique. Take turns having each family member name one thing that makes her different from others in your house. *Examples:* "I'm left-handed," "I have red hair." How many examples can you come up with?



### HELPFULNESS

When you have company, give your child a special job to teach him about being helpful. You might put him in charge of taking photographs of guests, hanging up their coats, playing with younger children, or setting out snacks.



### FAIRNESS

Choose a favorite game. But instead of playing the usual way, let your youngster pick a rule to ignore, such as taking turns. Play the game without that rule. Then, talk about how rules make the game fair for everyone—and more fun!

