



Summer Home Learning Recipes...

...for Parents and Children

Grades 4-5

READING ACTIVITIES

A Lifetime of Reading -- Encourage lifelong reading. Read with your youngsters by taking roles in stories and acting out dramatic poems. Whenever possible, tape record these sessions. Then listen to and enjoy these performances together.

Street Smarts -- Put reading skills to practical use. Gather bus and subway route maps and schedules to a special place in your area -- the zoo, a museum, a football stadium. Let your child plan a trip for friends or family. Figure out the travel time required, the cost, and the best time to make the trip.

TV and the World -- Connect current events to TV viewing. Post a world map next to the TV set. Watch the TV news with your children and have them locate world news spots. Keep reference books such as dictionaries and the world almanac close by. In this way, children find answers to questions when their curiosity is high.

MATH ACTIVITIES

A Trip to the Supermarket -- Plan ahead with the 3 R's. Ask your child to choose a dish to prepare for a meal -- a pudding, a salad, a sandwich. Have your child check to see what supplies are on hand and then make a shopping list. At the supermarket, let your child select the food on the list. First, your child decides which items are the best buys and makes selections. Also have your child write the price of each item on the list and if possible figure the total, checking the prices against the sales receipt.

On the Move -- Sharpen math skills on trips. Use even short trips around town. For example, at the gas station, ask your child how much gas you needed and the cost per gallon. On the highway, ask your children to read the signs and check the different speed limits. Then ask them to watch the speedometer readings and notice how fast or slow the car is going. Have your children estimate distances between cities and check the estimates on a road map.

Newspaper Math -- Use the Weather section to check temperatures across the nation and the world. This is good geography practice, too. Discuss baseball and football scores and averages on the sports pages. Who are the high scores? What are the percentages?

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Picture Stories -- Develop imagination and creativity. Have your children select four or five pictures from magazines and newspapers, and put them together to tell a story. Ask your children to number the pictures -- 1,2,3, etc. First, ask them to tell the story with the pictures in numerical order. For variety, have your children rearrange the pictures and tell a new story using this different arrangement.

Writing Instead of Talking -- Exchange notes instead of words at different times during the day -- when getting up in the morning, at dinner, or at bedtime -- or whenever the noise level becomes too high.

Day-by-Day Calendar -- Turn a large calendar -- commercial or home made -- into a personalized family communication center. Have your children fill in the blanks with morning messages, weather reports, birthdays, special activities, or notes to the family.

SOCIAL STUDIES ACTIVITIES

A Closer Look -- Help your children become aware of family responsibilities. Make a chart of family chores, including the name of the person responsible, the days and time required, etc. Discuss ways to change or improve these job assignments.

History Time Line -- Record history at home. Stretch a roll of shelf paper along the floor. Use a ruler to make a line about three feet long. (Use a separate sheet for each child.) Ask your children to fill in the important dates in their own lives, starting with their birth. Those familiar with U.S. history can fill in major dates since the founding of our country. Display these finished time lines in a special place for all to see.

The Foreign Touch -- Travel abroad at home. Visit ethnic shops, food stores, and restaurants in your community. Before the trip, have your children find on a map different countries you will "visit." After the trip, encourage your children to talk about what they have seen.

These home learning "recipes" have been tested and developed by Dr. Dorothy Rich, author of MEGASKILLS®, for the National Education Association. They appeared in a U.S. Department of Education brochure, Summer Home Learning Recipes.



Summer Home Learning Recipes... ...for Parents and Children Grades K-3

Educational research has made it clear that parents who are actively involved in their children's learning at home help their children become more successful learners in and out of school. During the early adolescent years, adult guidance is especially important. Here are some reading, writing, math, and science Home Learning Recipe activities. These have been developed by the Home and School Institute. Children are eager learners: they are interested in everything around them. These easy-to-do activities encourage children's active learning and those words of growing confidence, "I can do it." Think of these as started activities to get your ideas going. There are opportunities everywhere for teaching and learning.

READING ACTIVITIES

Sorting and Stacking--Teach classification skills with dinnerware. Ask your child to match and stack dishes of similar sizes and shapes. Also have your child sort flatware--forks with forks, spoons with spoons. This is like recognizing the shapes of letters and numbers.

Telephonitis --Give your child practice in reading numbers left to right by dialing a telephone. Make a list of telephone numbers your child can read--for relatives, friends, the weather bureau--and have your child make a call or two.

Let 'Em Eat Shapes--Cut bread into different shapes--rectangles, triangles, squares, circles. Make at least two of each shape. Ask your youngster to choose a pair of similar shapes, then to put jam on the first piece, and to place the second piece on top to make a sandwich. This is a snack plus a game to match shapes.

Dress Me--Increase your child's vocabulary. Teach the name of each item of clothing your child wears--shirt, blouse, sweater, sock, shoe--when your child is dressing or undressing. Also teach the body parts--head, arm, knee, foot. Then print the words on paper and ask your child to attach these papers to the clothes in the closet or drawers. Make a pattern of your child lying on a large sheet of paper. Tack it up. Ask your child to attach the words for the body parts to the right locations.

Hidden Letters--Build reading observation skills with this activity. Ask your child to look for letters of the alphabet on boxes and cans of food and household supplies. For example, find five A's or three C's, or any number of letters or combinations on cereal boxes, soup cans, bars of soap. Start with easy-to-find letters and build up to harder-to-find ones. Then have your children write the letters on paper or point out the letters on the boxes and cans.

SCIENCE ACTIVITIES

Ice Is Nice--Improve observation and questioning skills by freezing and melting ice. Add water to an ice cube tray and set it in the freezer. Ask your child how long it will take to freeze. For variety, use different levels of water in different sections of the tray. Set ice cubes on a table. Ask your child how long they will take to melt. Why do they melt? Place the ice cubes in different areas of the room. Do they melt faster in some places than in others? Why?

Float and Sink--Encourage hypothesizing (guessing). Use several objects--soap, a dry sock, a bottle of shampoo, a wet sponge, an empty bottle. Ask your child which objects will float when dropped into water in a sink or bathtub. Then drop the objects in the water, one by one, to see what happens.

What Does It Take to Grow?--Teach cause-and-effect relationships. Use two similar, healthy plants. Ask your child to water one plant and ignore the other for a week or two, keeping both plants in the same place. At the end of that time, ask your child to water the drooping plant. Then talk about what happened and why. Plants usually perk up with water just as children perk up with good words and smiles from parents.

WRITING ACTIVITIES

Disappearing Letters--Promote creativity and build muscle control with a pail of water and a brush. On a warm day, take your children outside to the driveway or sidewalk and encourage them to write anything they wish. Talk about what they've written.

Comic Strip Writing--Use comic strips to help with writing. Cut apart the segments of a comic strip and ask your child to arrange them in order. Then ask your child to fill in the words of the characters (orally or in writing).

And That's the End of the Story--Improve listening skills and imagination. Read a story aloud to your child and stop before the end. Ask the child how the story will turn out. Then finish the story and discuss the ending with the child. Did it turn out the way you thought?

MATH ACTIVITIES

Laundry Math--Sharpen skills by doing a necessary household job. Ask your youngster to sort laundry--before or after washing. How many socks? How many sheets? And you may find a lost sock as well.

Napkin Fractions--Make fractions fun. Fold paper towels or napkins into large and small fractions. Start with halves and move to eighths and sixteenths. Use magic markers to label the fractions.

Weigh Me--Teach estimating skills. Ask your children to guess the weight of several household objects--a wastebasket, a coat, a full glass of water. Then show children how to use a scale to weigh the objects. Next, have them estimate their own weight, as well as that of other family members, and use the scale to check their guesses. Some brave parents get on the scale, too.

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