

# Parent Power Grades K-3

*A Major Ingredient in the Recipe for Education Success*

Education 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. Here are some reading, writing, math and science home-learning recipes. Parents of young children in pre-kindergarten through third grade will find them to be easy and enjoyable ways to work with the school—using materials they have at home to build their children's skills.

## **Reading Activities**

**Hidden Letters.** Build reading observation skills with this activity. Ask your child to look for letters of the alphabet on boxes, 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 ones. Then have the child write the letters on paper or point out the letters on the objects where they were "hidden."

**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.

**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.

**Let 'Em Eat Shapes.** Teach very young children to recognize basic shapes, using toasted bread, jam and a dull-edged knife. Cut the bread into different shapes—rectangles, 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 place the second piece on top to make a sandwich.

**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 and undressing. Also teach the body parts—head, arm, knee, foot. Then print the words on paper and ask the child to attach these papers to the clothes in the closet or drawers. Make a silhouette of your child from a large sheet of paper, tack it to a bedroom wall, and ask your child to attach the words for the body parts to the right locations.

## **Writing Activities**

**Comic Strip Writing.** Use comic strips to help with writing. Cut off the "balloons" over each character's head. Then ask the child to invent words for the characters (orally or in writing).

**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.

**Story Endings.** Improve listening skills and imagination by reading a story aloud to your child and stopping before the ending. Ask the child how the story will turn out. Then finish the story and discuss the ending with the child.

## **Math Activities**

**Laundry Math.** Sharpen thinking skills by doing a necessary household job. Ask your youngster to sort laundry before or after washing. How many socks? How many sheets?

**Napkin Fractions.** Make fractions fun to learn. 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 make guesses about the weight of several household objects—a wastebasket, a coat, a full glass of water. Then show the children how to use a bathroom 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.

## **Science Activities**

**Ice is Nice.** Improve observation and questioning skills through 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 bath tub. Then drop the objects in the water, one by one, to test your child's hypotheses.

**Caring for and Feeding Plants.** Teach cause-and-effect relationships. Give your child two similar, healthy plants. Ask the 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 the child to water the drooping plant. Then talk about what happened and why.

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Engaging Our Parents, Empowering Our Schools

