

Summer Home Learning Recipes

for Parents and Children

Grades 4-5

"Parents and families are the first and most important teachers. If families teach a love of learning, it can make all the difference in the world to our children."

Richard W. Riley
U.S. Secretary of Education

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.

Here are some reading, writing, math, and social studies Home Learning Recipe activities. These have been developed by the Home and School Institute. Parents of fourth and fifth graders 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. Many of the activities focus on talk--sharing ideas and feelings, providing information, and responding to the needs of youngsters to grow as separate and responsible individuals.

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.

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.

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?

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 activities may sound too easy to do any good. Make no mistake. They work.

They build children's interest in learning and this translates into achievement both in school and beyond.

Think of these as starter activities to get your ideas going. There are opportunities everywhere for teaching and learning.

Take a little time to do a lot of good!

For more information on other publications to help your children learn call:

1-800-USA-LEARN
U.S. Department of Education

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