

# Homemade Learning Fun



Children love to make things. Let your youngster use her imagination—and build math, reading, and science skills—with these simple projects.

## What's the math question?

Usually children have to give the answers to math problems. In this Jeopardy-like game, you give your youngster the answers, and they have to come up with the questions.

**Ingredients:** poster board, markers

Divide a poster board into 24 boxes (3 columns across, 6 rows down). In the four boxes across the top, write math categories: Addition, Subtraction, Multiplication, and Division. Then, put any number between 0 and 99 in each box. Assign each row a point value. For instance, players might get 10 points for correctly answering a problem in the first row, 20 for the second, and so on.

Each player selects a category (such as Addition) and "plays" the first number (for example, 16). He has to come up with an addition problem that equals 16. Example:  $10 + 6$  or  $13 + 3$ . If he's correct, he crosses the number off, scores the points for that row, and gets another turn. If he's wrong, it's the other player's turn.

Take turns until all the numbers have been used. The person with the most points wins.

## Design a robot

Your child can build geometry skills while she builds her very own robot.

**Ingredients:** paper towel tube, aluminum foil, construction paper, scissors, glue, buttons, stapler, pipe cleaners

Have your youngster wrap a piece of aluminum foil around a paper towel tube. Ask her what shape the tube is (cylinder). Next, she can make a "control panel" with buttons and switches by cutting different shapes (circles, triangles, squares) out of construction paper and gluing them to the front of her robot. Have her use buttons for eyes and staple colorful pipe cleaners to the top of the tube for the antenna.



## My own dictionary

This do-it-yourself dictionary can boost your youngster's vocabulary.

**Ingredients:** index cards, dictionary, pencil, small file box, A-B-C dividers (homemade or bought)

Ask your child to pick a word that begins with the letter A (example: awesome). Have her write the word on the front of an index card. Then, help her look up the word in the dictionary. On the back of the card, she can write her own definition. Example: "How I feel when I get a good grade." Finally, encourage her to draw a picture that reminds her of the word. Another day, move on to the letter B. You can give her cards in A-B-C order in the file box. Over time, she'll have a dictionary from A to Z.

## Super paratrooper

Your child can explore how parachutes work by making a miniature one.

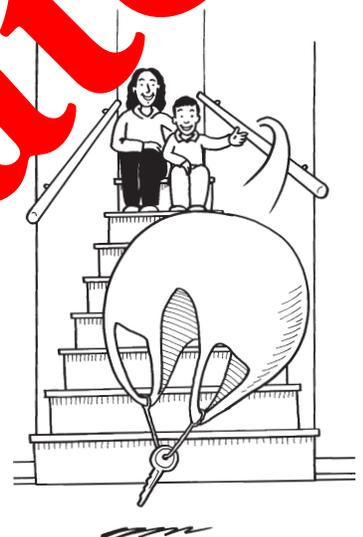
**Ingredients:** string, paraffin or tape measure, scissors, handkerchief or square scarf, key

Help your youngster measure and cut four 2-foot pieces of string. Let her tie one string to each corner of a handkerchief or square scarf, knot together the free ends of the strings.

Then have him tie the key to the bottom of that knot.

He can "fly" his parachute by tossing it from a high place like the top of the stairs. The parachute "catches" air, which slows down its fall.

What will happen if he takes off the key and drops the handkerchief again? Have him test it and see. (It will fall more slowly.)



continued