

Parents - If you haven't already read the pages on "Developing Character in Your Children," you might want to go there first before reading these pages.



Mini Books

A creative way to organize some ideas is to make mini books of various types to fit a particular topic. Here are a few variations:

- Books can be divided into sections, by graduated flaps.
- The books can be made to look like an animal or person by the shape of the front cover.
- Books can be made like little matchbooks and then put into a miniature "bookcase" made of folded paper.
- Book covers can have flaps that lift with writing or pictures below can be a clever way of studying for a test. (ex. a barn)

See Big Book of Books and Activities, by Dinah Zike.

Creativity

vs. underachievement

"Approaching a need, a task, or an idea from a new perspective."

Teaching Your Children to be Creative

Many of us might think creativity is a talent our children have to be born with. At least it is difficult to imagine it as a character quality. But our children can be taught to approach challenges with creativity and to develop a life-style of doing so. Everyone has the ability to develop that kind of creativity.

Discouragement, accompanied by "I can't" statements, is probably the biggest enemy to creativity. Fear of failing causes a child to freeze and block any creative thoughts that might emerge. By encouraging your child with your own positive tone of voice to think outside the box, to get a fresh perspective, and to try again, he can begin to find creative new ways to solve problems.

When a child is not discouraged from imaginary thinking and typical childish interpretations, he will be emboldened to try different approaches to tasks. Allow your child plenty of time and materials to play at putting things together in different sorts of ways, to feel textures, and to mix colors. Never make fun of what he has created.

Let your conversation with him include "what if..." kinds of questions: "What if we put this on top of that?" "What would it look like if we had dinner under the table?" They might be silly questions, but can cause some creative thoughts to flow.

Reading and talking about famous inventors can encourage creativity, as that character quality is necessary to produce innovative ideas and solutions. Perhaps your child would like to try to design solutions to everyday household needs, using handy materials such as paper clips, string, paper, etc. Be sure to praise his efforts!

Crazy Animals

(Game for at least 3 people; let each player think of an animal.)

1. Fold a piece of paper into thirds vertically.
2. The first player draws the head and neck of an animal, letting the lines extend slightly into the middle third of the paper. The other players are not allowed to see what was drawn.
3. Let the next person draw the torso and tail of the animal he chooses, beginning with the lines extended from the first third.
4. Again, be sure that the lines are extended slightly into the bottom third of the paper.
5. The third person (who has not seen the drawings), draws the legs and feet of the animal of his choice, beginning with the extended lines.
6. Unfold the sheet and show the strange animal that was drawn!

