

Create a Family How-to Guide

These days, pretty much all appliances have complicated directions. The washing machine, DVR, or home security system may not be as easy for your child (or your babysitter!) to understand. With this activity, your child will create a homemade "how-to" guide that will give directions on how to do certain household tasks. He'll figure out how to work that tricky DVR and get a chance to practice his reading and writing skills!

What You Need:

- Notepad
- Pen
- Stapler
- Paper
- Colorful paper
- Markers
- Computer and printer (optional)

What You Do:

1. Ask your child to observe you doing some common household tasks, such as operating the dishwasher or washing machine, turning on the computer, programming the DVR, or arming/disarming the security system.
2. Go slowly. Say each step of the task out loud as he watches you do it. Hand him a notepad and a pen and have him carefully write down each step. Encourage him to make notes or illustrations that will help him remember something! If you can, try to come up with an acronym or a jingle to add to the guide that will help him remember!
3. Check over his writing to make sure it's clear, and then try following the directions together. If there are any errors or missing steps, invite your child to observe you again so he can correct the mistakes.
4. Rewrite his directions in neat handwriting or type it up on the computer. If he wants to add illustrations, hand him the markers and let him go to town.
5. Ask your third grader to arrange the pages any way he likes, and then use a piece of colorful paper so he can decorate a cover. Title the book something like, "My Family How-to Guide."
6. Staple the directions together, or hole-punch them and put them into a folder. Find an easy-to-find location to keep the guide, and be sure to let the babysitter know where it is!

