

CEREAL BOX Puzzles

by Barbara Sher

Cereal and cracker boxes can be used to make an instant puzzle. This is a good way to recycle, reuse and educate.

Cut out the front and back of the cereal box. Cut each side in half forming two large rectangles.

Make a few sets of puzzles so each child in the group can have their own.

Directions

Show children how the two parts can be put together to make a whole picture again. Then let them try it on their own. Provide assistance as needed. Once the children accomplish the task a few times, have them trade puzzles with another child

Variations

- 1) After the children have mastered this game, you cut or have them cut the halves in half again so that there are now four pieces to each puzzle.
- 2) Cut another box side with a diagonal cut this time so that you have two triangular halves instead of two rectangles.
- 3) When the children are ready for an added challenge, cut the pieces in abstract shapes rather than just squares, triangles or rectangles. If your child needs help with this type of puzzle, you can lay the puzzle on a piece of paper and outline each piece so he can see how the shapes fit together more clearly.
- 4) You can also make a more attractive (and less commercial looking) puzzle by pasting a picture from a magazine on a piece of cardboard instead. Pictures from National Geographic or Smithsonian magazines work well.



What is being Learned

Puzzles encourage children to notice similarities, such as how the color red or the bold line in one piece match up to the same features in another piece.

When children try more than one puzzle, they are learning to transfer their knowledge from one experience to a similar one.

By trading puzzles with classmates, they are learning the upside of sharing, it enlarges ones experiences. In other words, share and you get more puzzles.

Modifications

For children who have motoric difficulties and tend to be clumsy with their hands, lay down a non-slip mat so the cardboard puzzle piece will stay put while the other piece or pieces are being added.

To help children understand the concept of putting parts together to make a whole, make sure that they are part of the process by either letting them see the picture on the whole side of the box before you cut it, letting them help you cut the box, or letting them cut the box in half themselves. ♥

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