

Computers & Kids

NEWS

Volume 5, Issue 6

COMPUTER
EXPLORERS®

June 2008

Make This Summer Amusing

With or Without Amusement Parks!

Summer vacation trips to amusement parks aren't very amusing for children not yet tall enough to go on all the rides. If your young child has a fascination for amusement parks but isn't quite big enough to enjoy all the rides, let them pick from a variety of lively amusement park coloring pages at <http://www.preschoolcoloringbook.com/color/cpamuse.shtml>.

For more sustained learning and fun all summer long, check out the Reader Rabbit Preschool Variety Pack, 3 CD's for ages 4-6. Join Reader Rabbit and friends on the Math CD as they hop along from the arcade to the roller coaster, using numbers to solve puzzles and win great prizes. You can find Reader Rabbit software at its manufacturer's site at www.broderbund.com.

Hands-on carnival fun continues with K'Nex Carnival Activities Picture Bricks designed for children ages 4 and up. Placing a transparent building plate onto the instruction grid allows little hands to match up colors to create merry-go-rounds, Ferris wheels, and more. See www.mastermindtoys.com for this product and others for older children (see K'Nex at right).

Encourage your child to create his/her own thriller by wearing the Digital Blue Tony Hawk Helmetcam on a two-wheeler bike ride, swing at the park, or ride on the teacups at the state fair. For just over \$30 you can get a cool video camera that attaches to your child's helmet. The Digital Blue is available at www.Amazon.com.

If you visit a real amusement park, stay safe by starting with a visit to the Saferparks Kids Club website at http://www.saferparks.org/kids_club/. Learn the six steps to safer riding and how to make all amusement activities safer for children. Printable activity pages will reinforce the rules while children color on the way to the park.

LittleClickers.com
Roller Coasters

When it comes to roller coasters, you either love 'em or hate 'em. Here's a closer look at these truly incredible machines.

1) What is the fastest roller coaster in the world?
2) What is the tallest roller coaster in the world?
3) What is the longest roller coaster in the world?
4) What is the most expensive roller coaster in the world?
5) What is the most dangerous roller coaster in the world?
6) What is the most popular roller coaster in the world?
7) What is the most famous roller coaster in the world?
8) What is the most thrilling roller coaster in the world?
9) What is the most exciting roller coaster in the world?
10) What is the most fun roller coaster in the world?

Locate and print the above
Buckleitner Internet activities at
www.computerexplorers.com

Give your older children an architectural challenge this summer with a K'Nex roller coaster kit. Children ages 9+ get endless opportunities for speed and fun! For inspiration, visit a K'Nex Roller Coaster video like this one on YouTube.com <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qWHdyRFX348>. After creating the ultimate ride, challenge children to name their creation, videotape it, and post-it on YouTube!

Buckleitner Box

Dear Parents,
When a package arrived with a peculiar-looking pen and notebook I followed the instructions, turned on the pen, opened to page one, and touched a word. That's when the pen started talking!

The Pulse Smartpen (www.livescribe.com) is an audio recorder that is just a bit fatter than a Sharpie marker. Its tiny tip can detect a faint pattern of dots on the paper to give the pen its bearings. Without this special paper, it's an old fashioned ballpoint pen. What's so special about it?

- a) It can capture what you write, and "replay" it on a Windows computer screen. See <http://tinyurl.com/6s3uqj> for a sample of a lecture I recorded.
- b) It can record large amounts of extremely clear audio.
- c) It can associate written notes with the sounds that are going on, at the exact instant the marks on the page were made. So you go back to a page of old notes, touch the point of the pen on any word, and hear that exact point in the lecture. For a reporter doing an interview or a student cramming for a test, this feature could be a lifesaver!

Warren Buckleitner, PhD, Editor
Children's Technology Review