

# Chicago Family Science Page



Changing the Face of Science

## Parents

### Success In Science Begins At Home

Children are born curious and love exploring the world around them. As your children's first teacher, you can channel this natural curiosity into activities that enhance their knowledge, and help them develop a life-long interest in the sciences.

While many think that their children are learning the science they need at school, the fact is that there is very little time devoted to science instruction in most classrooms, especially at the elementary level. You, as a parent, play a critical role in helping your children build the strong foundation that will lead to future academic success.

As part of Self Reliance Foundation's program, *Celebra La Ciencia*, this science page is intended to help parents and children explore the world of science together, with activities and information about resources and family-oriented events in their own community.

## Meet a Latino Scientist

**Ken Ramirez:**  
Marine Animal Trainer and Researcher

Ken Ramirez never dreamed his childhood love of animals, would one day lead him to become one of the country's foremost experts on training dolphins and other aquatic mammals. It all began in high school, when Ramirez volunteered at a local program to train guide dogs for people with vision problems, and decided he would like to have a job doing the same thing when he grew up. He also found out that he would need to study science to achieve this dream. "The truth is, when I was very young, I didn't like science very much. I didn't have very much interest in things like that. Like many kids, I was interested in sports, in other things, but I did have an interest in animals."



So he decided to go to the University of Houston to study animal behavior and psychology. But one summer, he found a part-time job working at an aquarium in Galveston, Texas helping train dolphins. Because he grew up in El

Paso, hundreds of miles from the ocean, he had never seen dolphins, or other sea creatures before. Although he started out thinking of the job as just a way to pay for school, he soon discovered that he loved it and wanted to make this his life's work.

"I discovered a type of career that I had never known existed." When he returned to school, he began studying biology, learning all that he could about the ocean and marine life. Today, at the Shedd Aquarium in Chicago, Ramirez oversees the training of various marine animals, from dolphins to penguins, as well as the aquarium's education, research, and conservation programs. He also wrote a book that is used by aquariums and zoos around the world. While sometimes science seems difficult, Ramirez says kids shouldn't think that they cannot succeed.

"If you really want to do something, you should try and fight to make that dream come true."

## Resources



Call us for free information about parenting issues, helping your child succeed in school, and referrals to fun science activities in your community.

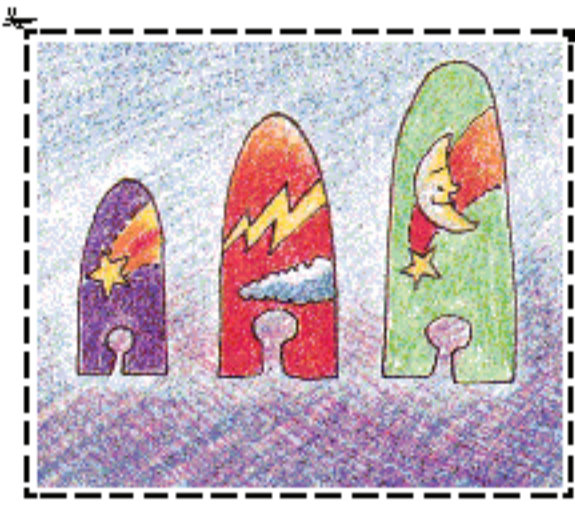
1-800-473-3003

## Activity

### Materials Soap Boats

Thin cardboard from a cereal box  
Bar of soap - Pencil - Scissors  
Big bowl of water

1) Carefully cut out each of the boat shapes on this page and trace them onto the non-printed side of the cardboard with a pencil. 2) Use scissors to cut out the shapes you have traced. 3) Break off a piece of soap about the same size as a pea. Place it in the round slot near the back of one of the boats. 4) Float the boat flat on the water with the smooth side down. What happens? (Rinse out the bowl and get fresh water before you use the next boat.)



**Ask Yourself!**  
What do you think makes the boats move?  
Can you make the boats out of other materials?



These boats really move!

**Explanation:** The molecules of water on the surface pull together very tightly. This creates something called surface tension. But soap loosens the bonds between the molecules and prevents them from pulling together as much. When you put the boat in the water, the water molecules in front of the boat pull on it with more strength than the molecules near the soap in the back, so the boat moves forward. This will keep happening until the soap spreads all over the surface of the water, which is why you have to change the water from time to time. Try putting your soap piece on a corner of the boat instead of in the middle. What happens?

## Calendar

**Dia de Los Niños and Celebra La Ciencia**  
Sunday, April 27, 2003 at 11 a.m.  
Celebration starts at 11 a.m. at the Plaza de Tenochtitlan, Blue Island Ave. and 18th St. with a parade leading to the festival site in Harrison Park. Includes a variety of hands-on science activities and exhibits until 3p.m.  
*Learn about sharks and what they eat, make toys out of invasive plants, & more!!*

**Celebra La Ciencia is coming to the Tenth Annual Family Health Fair, August 1, 2003!**  
Join us from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. at Mozart Park.

Celebra La Ciencia would like to thank the following partners who will bring FUN science activities to the **Dia de Los Niños:**

Also, the Brookfield Zoo, the John G. Shedd Aquarium, Latin Women in Action, and the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago.

**We're on the Web!**  
Information, resources, activities, fun links, and more...

[www.celebralaciencia.org](http://www.celebralaciencia.org)