

BUILDING SKILLS @ HOME

THE ALPHABET

LEARNING THE ALPHABET:

Learning the alphabet is more than just memorizing and singing the ABC song. Children need to know the letter names, recognize the letter shape, and associate the sound(s) that the letter makes. Children need to be able to identify the letters and supply their sounds with automaticity. This will help them in the future with more automatic decoding.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

A child's knowledge of letters, their names, and sounds is a strong predictor of reading success. To decode a single word, children need to remember the sound that correlates with each letter. Children need to recall the letter shape, automatically recall the sound associated with the letter and have the ability to blend these sounds. When writing a word, children do the opposite. They must remember the letter that goes with the sound they are hearing, picture the letter in their mind, and form the letter correctly from memory with their fine motor skills.

YOUR CHILD'S NAME:

It is very likely that the first letter a child will learn is the first letter in his / her name. The next letters they will likely learn are the rest of the letters in their name as well as important words such as mom and dad. Do activities with only the letters in your child's name and build from there.

LETTERS ARE EVERYWHERE!

The more you notice letters and point them out the more your child's curiosity about letters will build. Look for letters around your house, in books, on food packages, and on clothing. Letter magnets for your refrigerator are a great way to introduce and review letter names and sounds.

When you are out in the community or while driving the car, notice the letters on signs, menus, advertisements, and labels.

FUN ACTIVITIES TO TRY:

Letter Card Ideas:

- Play Slap Jack with letter cards. Whoever says the name or sound first keeps the card. Whoever has the most cards at the end of the game wins.
- Emphasize the sound of each letter. Name 1-3 words that start with that letter
- Lay letter cards on the floor. Call out a name or a sound and have your child find it. Have your child hop, skip, or jump to the letter.
- Hang letter cards on the side of the refrigerator or on a wall. Call out a letter name or sound and have your child toss a ball. Instead of a ball, have your child use a fly swatter, a fairy wand, a flashlight, a spatula or other fun pointer.
- Go on a scavenger hunt! Hide the cards around the house and have your child search for them. Each time your child finds one, have them name the letter or the sound.

Magnetic Letter Ideas:

- Have your child put lower case magnetic letters in alphabetical order. Have your child touch each letter as they sing the alphabet song.
- Place your letters in a brown lunch bag or another container. Have your child reach into the bag and take out a letter. Your child should say the sound or name that matches the letter.
- Call out a letter name or sound and have your child find the magnetic letter on the refrigerator. Encourage your child to write the letter. Have your child write their letters on paper, a whiteboard, an iPad, a tray of salt, or roll the letters out of play dough.
- Have your child cut out several pictures from a magazine or newspaper. Ask your child to say the name of the picture and attach it to the refrigerator using the magnetic letter that matches the beginning letter sound. For example, if your child has a picture of a cat, they would use the magnetic letter C to pin up the picture.