

Letter Recognition Activities

BURIED LETTER TREASURE

Place small plastic letters in the sand table or in a Rubbermaid container filled with cornmeal. Encourage children to "hunt" for the letters that spell their names. If needed, provide an index card with the child's name to assist them in this process. Providing sifters, tweezers, or kitchen tongs adds a fine motor component to this fun activity.

T-CHART QUESTION

Have a student select a letter and use it to complete the sentence, "Does your name begin with the letter ___?" Provide columns for "Yes" and "No" and have students place a card with their name in the appropriate column. Variation: "Does your name contain the letter ___?"

HANDS ON LETTER FUN

Children should be given many opportunities to explore letters in many mediums. Using all sensory modalities to learn letters helps children assimilate this knowledge.

Make letters from: playdough, wikki sticks, unifix cubes, pipe cleaners, etc.

Write letters in: sand, shaving cream, salt, cornmeal, finger paint, etc.

Create large letters on the floor with masking tape and have children: walk on it, hop on it, drive a small car on it.

FISHING FOR LETTERS

Cut out 26 colorful fish shapes (construction paper or craft foam) and label each with an uppercase letter on one side and the lowercase letter on the flip side. Punch a hole in the "mouth" of each fish and attach a paperclip. Use 2 dowels, string, and a small magnet to create fishing poles. Scatter fish on the floor and allow children to take turns fishing. Once a fish is "caught" the child names the letter.

Variation: Encourage children to fish for the letters in their name.

NAME BUILDING

Label unifix cubes with each child's first name (using an uppercase letter for the first letter and lowercase for remaining letters). Place a name card and the corresponding letters in an individual baggie and encourage children to build their names.

Variation: Provide name cards for each student in the class and a bucket of letters so students may practice building the names of friends.

READ ALPHABET BOOKS TOGETHER

Some Favorites:

Alphabet Under Construction

26 Big Things Small Hands Do

Alphabet Adventures

The Accidental Zucchini

Eating The Alphabet

Alligators All Around

Hullabaloo ABC

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom

Alliteration Activities

PACK UP THE SOUND

Secretly choose a specific sound such as the beginning /b/ sound. Explain that the class is packing a suitcase for a special trip to Baltimore or Baton Rouge and only the items beginning with the secret sound will be packed in the suitcase.

Place some objects in the suitcase, all of which begin with the secret letter sound such as Bunny, Banana, Book, and Ball. Be sure to emphasize the first letter sound as you say the word. Invite children who think they know the secret sound to pack an object (you may want to have a large basket filled with objects that start with the secret sound and others that do not). Tell the children whether their object can be packed or not.

Continue playing until most of the children have figured out the secret sound. This activity can be done at home as well.

"NO ZOO FOR YOU!"

Place three animal cards (homemade or store bought) in a pocket chart, including two that begin with the same letter sound (for example: bear, bird, and goat).

Say each animal name together and invite a volunteer to remove the picture which does not belong (goat) and say, "NO ZOO FOR YOU!"

Repeat the same pattern with other picture cards, having children use deduction to determine which animals enter the zoo and which do not. This activity is ideal for individual or small groups.

SECRET SOUND

Punch holes in picture cards and string a piece of yarn through each picture to create necklaces. Give a picture necklace to each child.

Choose a target phoneme (sound) such a beginning /b/. Choose children wearing pictures with the target phoneme to stand in front of the class.

Have classmates guess the target phoneme then start again with another "secret sound".

Note: you can make your own picture cards using magazine photos and index cards.

SECRET SOUND MATCH

Using the picture card necklaces from above have the children find friends whose card begins with the same letter sound as there own card (ball, book, bird, bear). Once you have several groups with matching sounds have the group announce their sound.

ENJOY A GOOD BOOK TOGETHER (some suggestions)

Barn Yard Banter, Lilly's Purple Plastic Purse, Silly Sally, Rudy The Rude Rooster, Sheep In A Shop, A My Name Is Alice

Rhyming Activities

RHYME TIME

Read aloud a rhyming story or poem. Reread the selection. Omitting the matching rhyme, and encourage students to "fill in the blank." For example, "See the frog jump over the _____ (log).

Invite students to think of new rhyming words that fit each sentence. For example, "See the frog jump over the _____ (dog, hog).

STRING OF RHYMES

Working with one child or in a small group, start with a simple word with a lot of rhyming possibilities (hat, tall, sing, bell). Take turns saying a word that rhymes with the first word until you run out of rhymes. For more advanced students, make a list of the rhyming words on chart paper as they are said.

RHYME MATCH

Make headbands or yarn necklaces using rhyming pictures & words. Turn on some instrumental music and encourage children to find their rhyming partner. Switch necklaces and start again. Be sure that the rhyming cards contain both pictures and words.

NOISEY RHYMES

Review and discuss the concept of rhyming words. Show the children three picture/word cards, two of which rhyme, and have them identify the rhyming pair. Tell the children the number of rhyming pairs in a nursery rhyme (for example, *Jill, hill*), and challenge them to listen for and find them as you read it aloud (emphasizing the rhyming words the first few times you play this game). Distribute noisemakers and invite the children to make noise each time they hear the second half of a rhyming pair as you reread the rhyme. Clapping or stomping may be used in place of noisemakers.

READ RHYMING BOOKS TOGETHER (some suggestions)

Dr. Seuss books, Mother Goose rhymes, *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*, *Is Your Mama A Llama?*, *Dinosaurs Roar*, *Tumble Bumble*, *Slinky Malinki*, *Poodles Like Noodles*, *Altoona Baboona*, *Mrs. McNosh Hangs Up Her Wash*

Fine Motor Activities

A-Z Fine Motor Ideas

Assembling,
Block building, bubble wrap popping, & buttons,
Cutting, clay play, clips, clothes pins, crumpling, & crab walking
Drawing & dough
Egg Beater
Folding & finger puppets & finger paint
Gluing & geo boards
Hole punching & hammering
Inserting
Joining
Kneading
Lacing, linking, & Legos
Measuring & Magna Doodles
Nesting, nuts & bolts
Ooblock
Painting, puzzles, pushing, pegs, pick-up sticks, pouring, pennies & piggy bank
Quartering
Rubbing
Scooping, spreading, shaving cream, spray bottles, squeezing, stringing, & stickers
Tweezers, tearing, tongs, & tracing
Unlocking
Vegetable chopping
Weaving, wrapping, Wheelbarrow walking, writing, & wiggling
"X-ercising" fingers & hands
Zipping

WEAVING

Provide a laundry basket or baking racks and strips of material, ribbon, or yarn. Allow students to "weave" using an over, under method. Model this activity a few times teaching students to say "over, under, over, under" as they go along. This can also be done using wider strips of material and a chain link fence.

DIGGING FOR TREASURE

Bury hidden "treasures" (pennies, small beads, small shells, buttons, shelled nuts, etc.) in your sand table. Invite students to hunt for treasure using tongs, tweezers, or thumb and forefinger. Consider using items that correspond with current themes or seasons.

LETTER ROLLING

Provide alphabet placemats or laminated cards with alphabet letters & or children's names. Invite students to roll and manipulate play dough into letters. They can form the letters directly on the cards or use the cards as models.

ADDITIONAL FINE MOTOR IDEAS

Working with small blocks, Magna Doodles, Legos, snap blocks, etc. Crumpling and tearing paper, using scissors to cut play dough.

Remember to provide lots of opportunities for children to practice drawing and writing. Create a writing center (stock it well), place writing tools in the block and home living centers.

Gross Motor

Music and movement activities that include marching, hopping, skipping, galloping, and jumping help children develop important gross motor skills.

Some C.D. suggestions:

Mr. Al Sings & Moves

Bean Bag Activities & Coordination Skills

Ready, Set, Move- Greg & Steve

Kids in Motion- Greg & Steve

MOVE LIKE THE ANIMALS

Bear walk, crab walk, bunny hop, kangaroo jump, horse gallop, dinosaur stomp.

HULA HOOP HOP

Place different colored hula hoops around a large, open space. Instruct children to walk, march, skip, hop, etc. around the hoops without touching them till the music stops. When the music stops everyone freezes and waits for the new movement to be announced.

OBSTACLE COURSES

You don't need a sunny day to create an obstacle course. This one works just fine in the living room. Once you've set it up, make sure to demonstrate it at least once before giving your kid a crack at it. Keep in mind that you'll likely need to shout out reminders for the sections, since it will probably be too difficult for your child to remember the entire set of directions. Below is a sample course. If you don't have one of the items listed, feel free to substitute something else!

1. Bunny hop (hop forward with feet together) five times.
2. Crawl through a tunnel. (You can create a tunnel by placing a sheet over some chairs placed across from each other.)
3. Walk over several pillows or sofa cushions that are on the floor with space in between. (Your child will have to use balance to walk over this soft surface.)
4. Climb over an ottoman or footrest.
5. Use a large cooking spoon to transfer 3-5 blocks (or other small toys) one at a time into a bucket or container placed several feet away. (This is a great way to work on that coordination!)
6. Do five jumping jacks.
7. Side-step five times.
8. Toss 3-5 soft balls or stuffed animals into a laundry basket several feet away.
9. "Walk the tightrope!" (Place a jump rope or measuring tape on the floor and have your child walk across it, heel to toe.)
10. Bunny hop five more times to the finish line!

OUTDOOR OBSTACLE COURSE

1. Bunny-hop five times.
2. Go up the ladder and down the slide.
3. Swing on the swing as you count to ten.
4. Jump over a set of sticks or branches.
5. Use a cooking spoon to transfer rocks to a bucket.
6. Jump up and down five times.
7. Toss balls into a container.
8. "Walk the tightrope."
9. Run back to the starting line.

Concepts Activities

BODY PARTS

Sing *Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes*. After the children can easily find these body parts change the words (forehead, chin, wrist, and heel or hair, neck, knuckle, and ankle).

Play a game of Simon Says with your children. Give directions that involve parts of the body such as, "Touch your nose; Bend your knees; Tap your toe; Wave your hand." End the game by letting each child have a turn giving a direction.

Ask questions that encourage your children to explore how parts of their bodies work (what parts of your body can you bend? What body parts are found above the neck? Etc.)

Rock & Roll Body Parts- Mr. Al

COLORS

Sing *If You Are Wearing Red* (sung to *If You're Happy & You Know It*)

If you are wearing red shake your head

If you are wearing red shake your head

If you are wearing red than please shake your head

If you are wearing red shake your head

Blue-touch your shoe

Green-bow like a queen

Yellow-shake like Jell-O

Brown-turn around

Pink-give us a wink

Books

A Color of His Own-Leo Lionni, *Brow Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?*-Bill Martin Jr., *Colors Everywhere*-Tana Hoban, *Go Away Big Green Monster*-Ed Emberley, *Is it Red? Is It Yellow? Is It Blue?*-Tana Hoban, *A Little Blue A Little Yellow*-Leo Lionni, *Mouse Paint*-Ellen Stoll Walsh, *Planting A Rainbow*-Carolyn Kowalczyk
Mr. Al Sings Colors & Shapes

COUNTING

Begin each morning meeting by counting the number of friends present.

Encourage children to count ingredients for cooking activities (chocolate chips, apple slices, raisins, cups of flour, etc.)

Have students count plates, cups, napkins, and silverware for meal time.

Books

The Icky Bug Counting Book-Jerry Pallotta, *What Comes In 2's, 3's, and 4's?*- Suzanne Aker, *The Doorbell Rang*-Pat Hutchins, *Anno's Counting House*-Mitsumasa Anno, *Count!*-Denise Flemming, *Ten Black Dots*-Donald Crews, *Over In the Meadow*-Olive A. Wadsworth, *Mouse Count*-Ellen Walsh

Math In Motion-Mr. Al

POSITIONS & CONCEPTS

Play beanbag games using directional terms (place the beanbag behind your head, between your knees, etc.)

Compare objects (which is longest, littlest, empty, etc.)

SHAPES

Cut bread with different shape cookie cutters and make sandwiches, discuss the shapes.

Sort objects into "shape piles" (use food and make a "shape trail mix" using round pretzels, rectangular min graham crackers, triangular cheese crackers, and square cereal pieces).

Take a "shape walk" around the school or playground. During the walk, observe the shapes of objects (especially note circles, squares, and triangles). After returning to the classroom record the observed shapes on a shape chart.

Language Activities

PERSONAL DATA:

Play games with the child's name (Willoughby Wallaby Woo, Anna Anna Bobanna).

Use children's names frequently throughout the day (if your last name is Johns line up).

ARTICULATION

Rather than correcting a child, listen to what the child is saying and repeat it back using correct pronunciation and grammar ("I like phasketti." "You like spaghetti?").

OBJECTS & ACTIONS

Expose children to many pictures and books. Take time to describe what an object is and what it does. Put yourself on "speakerphone" for the children ("I need to make a list. Let me get a pencil to write with").

PROBLEM SOLVING

Ask children open ended questions:

"What would happen if...?"

"How do you suppose....?"

"What could you do to solve your problem?"

ADDITIONAL TIPS

Use complete sentences and correct grammar when speaking with children.

Speak clearly so that children hear the beginning and ending sounds of your words.