

Letter Knowledge

Letter Knowledge is one of the early literacy skills that researchers say is important for children to have in order to learn to read.

Letter Knowledge is knowing that the same letter can look different, that letters have names and are related to sounds.



Here are some ways you can develop or strengthen your child's knowledge of letters...

Babies/Toddlers...

Shapes:

Learning to tell one letter from another involves being able to see the differences in letter shapes.

Helping babies and toddlers learn about different shapes and to understand how things are alike and different will help prepare them to learn the alphabet.

Activity: Explore some objects with your baby or toddler. Let him hold the objects as you describe them.

Examples:

- Look at this round, red ball.
- Feel this soft, brown teddy bear.
- Here is a blue, square block.
Let's stack it on top of the yellow block.



Babies/Toddlers...

Shapes:

Read books that feature shapes, and talk to your baby or toddler about the things on the pages. Babies and toddlers also like to look at human faces.

Activity: Explore the books provided and talk about the shapes, colors, and sizes.

Activity: I Spy

Use the objects provided. Choose three objects and place them side by side. Say, *I spy with my little eye something _____*. (Choose a color, shape or size) *Can you find it?*

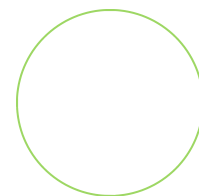
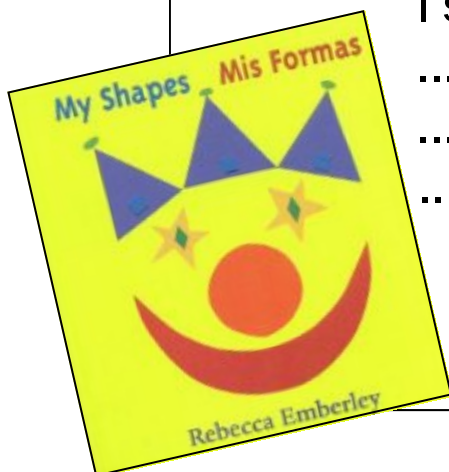
Examples:

I spy with my little eye...

...something red

...something round

...something tiny



Preschoolers...

Letter Awareness

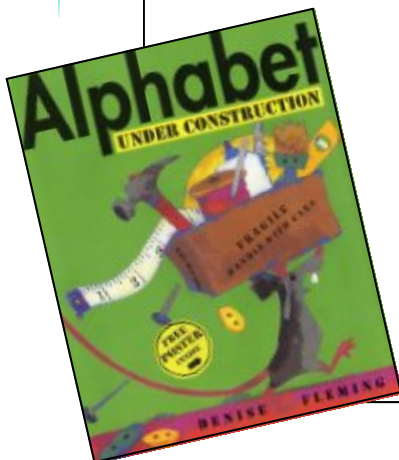
One of the best ways to begin teaching your young child about letters is by focusing on the letters in his or her name.

Activity: Write your child's name on a piece of paper and let her decorate it with the materials provided. Help your child identify the letters.

Activity: I Spy

Choose a book from those provided. Tell your child that you'll be looking for the letter of his first name in the book. When one of you finds it on a page, say, *I spy with my little eye, the letter _____!*

If your child can already identify her letter, play the game with the sound of the letter instead. Hannah's name: *I spy with my little eye something that begins with /h/ (hammer).*



Preschoolers...

Letter Awareness

To help your child become familiar with the shape of letters and practice forming them on his own, try these activities...

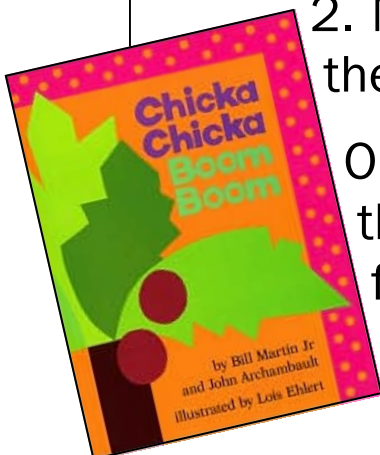
Activity: Clay letters

1. Print the letters of your child's name on the paper, making them at least 6 inches tall (for younger children, try just the first letter).
2. Roll lumps of clay or dough into long, thin strips.
3. Help your child form the strips over the letters. At first, your child can make the letter directly on the written model. He or she can progress to forming the strips below the written letter, using it as a guide.

Activity: Magnetic letters

1. Help your child find the letters of her name, then spell it out.
2. Mix up the letters and see if she can put them back in order again.

Older children can look for the letters of their names when they are mixed in with a few other letters.



School-Age...

Letter Awareness

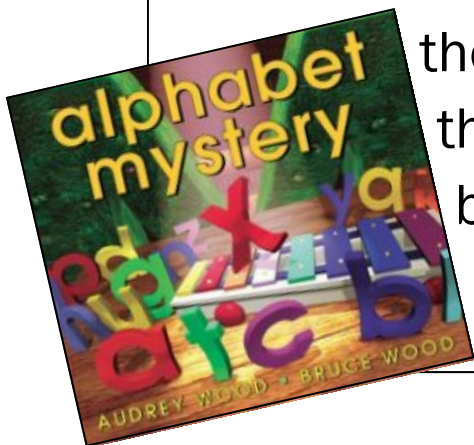
Because we use so many different types of print, it can be challenging for children to identify letters.

Activity: Letter Round-up

Use the letter cards provided. Mix them up and ask your child to find all the letter A's, then G's, Q's, T's and W's.

Activity: I Spy/I Hear

- *With a book:* Choose a letter. Identify the sound it makes. Look for objects that begin with that letter/sound in the alphabet books provided.
- *Out and about:* Choose a letter. Identify the sound it makes. Look around the room and find something that begins with the same sound.



Center Instructions...

- Choose a variety of alphabet books to set out. Choose a variety of board books that include shapes, concepts or baby faces.
- Set out a variety of objects for babies/toddlers to explore shape, color, size, and texture. Know that babies will want to put them in their mouths, so have backups to exchange for those that get “germed.”
- Provide different kinds of paper for the name center, along with craft supplies with which to decorate.
- Provide Model Magic or play dough. Be sure it is non-toxic.
- Provide magnetic letters. *Optional: provide a cookie sheet on which the letters will stick.*
- Cut apart the attached letter cards and put them in a large envelope or basket.



a

A

ɑ

v

a

A

g

G

g

G

Q

Q

q

q

q

t

v

t

T

t

W

W

w

W

w
