



Letter Sounds and Letter Recognition Activities

What is “letter sound and letter recognition” and why is it important?

The ability to name letters of the alphabet is called “letter recognition,” and the ability to identify sounds that letters produce is called “letter sounds.” When referring to the first letter sound of a word, it is called “*initial* letter sound.”

Recognizing letters and letter sounds is a component of the developmental process for emergent readers. It’s important to note that even though a child may not have *all* letters and sounds mastered, it’s still essential that he/she is exposed to real text and books. This can be accomplished through reading aloud to students and encouraging them to “read” by using the pictures of their favorite books.

Letter Sounds and Letter Recognition Activities:

1. Your child’s name is the most important word at this phase! Practice writing his/her name and find objects around the house that begin with the same letter as the name. If you’re adventurous, you can even have your child practice writing his/her name in shaving cream or salt sprinkled on a cookie sheet. Emphasize the beginning sound of the name.
2. Write letters on post-it notes and have your child label stuffed animals, toys, and household items with objects that start with the same letter. Encourage your child to say the beginning sound as they label items with the post-it notes.
3. Notice and point out print that your child encounters naturally. For example, say things like, “There’s your favorite store—McDonald’s. What does that start with? Mmmm...” or “Let’s watch your favorite cartoon—*Sofia the First*. What does *Sofia* start with? Ssss...”
4. Show your child a sample of a letter, possibly the one his/her name begins with. Then, give him/her Play-doh to form the letter and say the sound.
5. Letter magnets can be used on a refrigerator or cookie sheet. Some activities with magnetic letters include:
 - Sorting letters into 2 columns—letters that are in the child’s name and letters that aren’t in his/her name
 - Naming the child’s favorite toy, food, or game and having them select the letter it begins with.
 - Matching upper-case and lower-case letters and saying the sound