

Phonics

Phonics is the ability to understand the relationship between letters and the sounds they represent.

This includes:

- Recognizing print patterns that represent sounds
- Syllable patterns
- Word parts (prefixes, suffixes, and root words)

Common Consonant Digraphs and Blends:

bl, br, ch, ck, cl, cr, dr, fl, fr, gh, gl, gr, ng, ph, pl, pr, qu, sc, sh, sk, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw, th, tr, tw, wh, wr

Common Consonant Trigraphs:

nth, sch, scr, shr, spl, spr, squ, str, thr

Common Vowel Digraphs:

ai, au, aw, ay, ea, ee, ei, eu, ew, ey, ie, oi, oo, ou, ow, oy

Phonics Activities

Each QR code links to a video example of the activity



Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.

- Next steps: Make blend sounds.



Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters “p-e-n” spell pen, how do you spell hen?). The QR codes show verbal games and a game using magnetic letters.



Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d).



Point out words that begin with the same letter as your child’s names (for example, John and jump). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.



Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.”



Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.



Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess which hand the letter is in. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man).



Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.



Build words. Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).



Beginning letter



Ending letter



Middle letter



Sentences



Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.

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Make words. For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull from the vowel bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.



Practice words with pictures. Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture, have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that letter.



Hunt for words. Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is "m," the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money, and microwave.

- Next steps: Hunt for words in a book.



Hints for helping your child sound out words



First Sound. Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture or surrounding words. Double-check the printed word to see if it matches the child's guess.



Sound and Blend. Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t). This is called "sounding it out," and then say the sounds together (sat). This is "blending."



Familiar Parts. When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as "presenting," your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word "sent," and the word ending -ing.



Actions and letter sounds. Practice the actions that go with each letter sound to help your child remember the sounds for each letter.



Play "Memory" or "Go Fish" using alphabet cards.

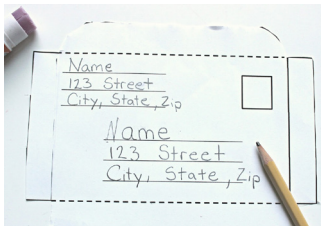
- Next Steps: Use consonant and vowel digraphs, trigraphs, and blends.



Label words. When reading with your child, keep Post-it notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-it. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.

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Children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Put a note in your child's backpack

or place one on their pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Have your child write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.

Hints for helping your child sound out words, cont'd



Recognizing shapes is the beginning of recognizing the features of letters.

Have your child sort letters by tall tails, short tails, hooks, humps, and circles. Your child can continue to sort by feature combinations as well (Ex: circles and tall tails, hooks and circles, humps and tall tails, etc.)



Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print. Have your child cut the images of these signs from bags, take-out containers, and fliers and post them somewhere to make an Environmental Print Word Wall.



Ask your child to look through ads to point out things they recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.



Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name

Make alphabet letters out of Play-doh®



Discuss how names are similar and different



Use stores as an opportunity for learning. Ask questions like, "Can you find something that has a letter C? Can you find a word that begins with an M? Can you find something with four letters?" Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.



Write letters with your finger on your child's back and have them guess the letter. Have your child do the same to you.



Read alphabet books to your child and eventually ask him/her to name the items on the page that you know they can successfully tell you.