

Learning Letters and Sounds



In the years before starting prep, children will show varying levels of interest in letters and sounds. Some children will already be reading and spelling simple words, whereas other children are just beginning to be aware of letters.

Ideally a child should be able to write their own name and have some awareness of letters and sounds prior to starting school.

There are many things you can do to help develop your child's interest in sounds. It can be as simple as pointing out letters and sounds to your children during everyday activities. Remember to always talk about the sound the letter makes, as well as the letter name eg. the letter 'es' says 'sssss' like a snake. Here are some ideas to try:

- At breakfast, point out the letters on the milk or cereal packets and comment on what it says.
- When doing grocery shopping, comment on the labels of food packaging eg. it says Milo, strawberries, ice-cream
- Point out road signs while driving and talk about how the letters spell out 'stop'
- Practice writing your child's name and get them to copy it
- Talk about other words that start with the same sound as your child's name
- Create letters of the alphabet using different materials eg. playdough, cooked spaghetti, glue coloured paper in the shape of a specific letter, scrunched up foil shapes, writing in shaving cream
- Buy magnetic letters to have on the fridge. Each day find a different letter, talk about the sound it makes and find something around the house that starts with that sound.
- Create a 'sound' scrapbook. Cut out pictures from advertising or old magazines. Find pictures that start with the same sound and glue them together. You can add to it over time and 'read' it again and again, talking about the different sounds.
- Write letters in wet sand, shaving foam or paint!

What can I do when reading books?

Try some of these ideas when looking at books together:

- Point out the title. Use your finger to point out the letters as you read it aloud.
- Pick a specific letter and see how many you can find in the book eg. the letter "b"
- Read alphabet books. Emphasize the sound at the beginning of each word and whether they are the same or different eg. *ball* and *book*, start with the same sound
- 'Write' your own book using simple pictures and some words. Then you can read it together again and again. It can be as simple as "I see a _____", "at the zoo there is a _____" or what did you do one day.
- Even with quite young children, talk about how you are reading the words and point out where the words are on the page.
- Count the number of words on each page and clap out the words.

If you're concerned about your child's speech or language development or any of the above areas, contact a speech pathologist to discuss whether assessment for your child is indicated.



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