



RECOGNIZING UPPER AND LOWER CASE LETTERS



One way your child can get ready for kindergarten is practicing the names of their letters. Begin with the uppercase letters and then move to the lowercase letters. If your child knows the names of their letters, start working on the sounds of each letter.

Make the practice fun and like a game by using some of these ideas. Short sessions of five or ten minutes are the best. Only a few cards have to be used at a time, this way your child will feel successful. Be positive, patient, and give lots of praise.

Spell My Name-Help your child pick out all the letters in their name and lay them out in order. Go through each letter and make the relevant sounds. Finally, spell the name out loud.

I Spy-Ask your child to pick a card. Review the letter and the sound it makes. Ask them to find something else in their home that starts with the same letter. It's easier if you go first so they have an example of what to do. It'll also help keep their attention if you pick something they love like biscuit, bike, book etc...instead of broccoli.

Cut and Paste-Ask your child to pick out a few of the flash cards. Give them a few old magazines you never had time to read anyway. Help them cut out pictures like the ones they see on the cards as well as pictures of other things that begin with the same letter. Try gluing them into a scrapbook and help them write the letter on the page. Make your own alphabet book.

Sing-Sing the alphabet song with your children as you go through the cards

Making Letters-Put cornmeal or sand in a cake pan or on a cookie sheet. Say a letter or show the letter card and have your children draw the letter in the cornmeal or sand.

Look and Search-Ask your children to take a page from a magazine, newspaper, or catalog and draw a circle around a letter. Have them identify the letter and circle some matching letters on the page.

Go Fish - ABC-Using alphabet flash cards (2 sets) play "go fish" using the flash cards.

Scavenger Letter Hunt-Hide a handful of magnetic letters around the room. (Or better yet: take it outside!) Flip over a card and call out the sound of that letter. Send your child off to find the letter that corresponds to that particular sound. For example, if you told her to find the letter that makes the /R/ sound, your kid has to bring back the letter R. Continue until all the letters have been found!

Slap It-Post the letters you are trying to teach your child around the house. Ask your child to slap the card and say its name and/or sound.

PRACTICING SIGHT WORDS AT HOME

Sight words are words that students encounter frequently in reading and writing. It is critical that readers and writers develop automatic recognition of high frequency words, a skill that leads to fluency.



HOPSCOTCH

Use sidewalk chalk and design a hopscotch grid on the sidewalk for this fun game. Write a high-frequency word in each square. Your child must be able to read a word before hopping or jumping into each square.



USE PLASTIC LETTERS

You can buy a set of plastic magnetic letters at the Dollar Store. Have your child put the letters on a cookie sheet or refrigerator to make the word, then read it. Later, encourage him/her to make the word, read the word, cover the word, write the word, check the word, read the word. (Children may peek at the word if necessary while they are learning to write it correctly.)



USE A DRY ERASE BOARD

Write the word over and over until it is learned, erasing each time. This is a writing task, not a copying task. If your child is using paper and pencil, fold the paper over each time or use another paper or card to cover the previous word. If your child needs a model to start with, provide it. Then cover it and allow him/her to peek if necessary. Then remove it altogether. Encourage your child to make sure the words are in his/her head.



I HAVE, WHO HAS?

Make cards for this game to practice sight words. I have "the," who has "from?"



FUNNY VOICES

As you go through the stack of cards, ask your child to read in the following voices: baby, robot (monotone), goofy, scary, mad, old.



CONCENTRATION

Create two of each high-frequency word cards. Lay the cards face down on the floor or table. Students take turns trying to match identical words. The student with the most pairs wins.



GO FISH

Duplicate a set of high-frequency word cards from the kindergarten word list. Each player receives 7 cards and follows the standard playing rules for Go Fish. The goal is to have matched word pairs. (Example: Player 1: "Do you have the word FROM?". If Player 2 does not have the requested word card, Player 1 must draw a card and play continues with the next person.



READ MY BACK!

"Write a sight word on your child's back. Can your child guess the word? Trade places--let your child trace a word from the list on your back. Continue taking turns tracing and guessing sight words.



BEEP

Choose a picture book to read aloud. Tell your child that whenever they hear the word Beep! it means you've left out a word. They need to guess what the word is. Read the story a second time, this time letting your child read as many sight words as they know.



ON THE RUN

The next time you're going somewhere with your child, play a sight word game. It's easy--just have your child find as many sight words as he or she can on billboards, signs, and so on. If you don't have a sight word list with you, invite your child to read the "little" words. You can play this game in a car, on a walk, even in line at the grocery store!



WORD CHECKERS

Make a checkerboard with a high-frequency word in each square. Set up the board with red and black checkers and play according to checkers rules. Players must be able to read each word correctly before they can move to the corresponding square.