The ABCs

Children who know the shapes and names of the letters of the alphabet and how to write them have a much easier time learning to read. This early literacy skill is called “letter knowledge.” Once children can name the upper and lowercase letters, they begin learning the sounds that go with them. At this age they also begin learning how to write the letters.

Here are some ways you can support your kindergartener at home:

- Point out letters and have your child name them.
- Make an alphabet book with your child using pictures from old magazines.
- Point out letters and sounds on labels, boxes, newspapers, and signs.
- Let your child play with magnet letters and blocks that have letters on them.
- Encourage your child to make letters with clay, wet spaghetti noodles, yarn, or form the shapes with their bodies or fingers. Trace letters in salt, sugar, sand, shaving cream, or on a steamy mirror (see page 2 for a play dough recipe).
- When your child is writing, encourage her to spell words by using what she knows about sounds and letters.
- Encourage your child to write emails, notes, letters, lists, greeting cards, etc.
- Read alphabet books with your child.

Book of the Month

Alphabet Mystery, by Audrey Wood, pictures by Bruce Wood

Little x is missing from Charley’s Alphabet, and the other lowercase letters go off to solve the mystery of his disappearance, learning in the end how valuable a little x can be.

Audrey and Bruce Wood have published lots of books for children. You and your child can visit their website at www.audreywood.com for a list of books, games and activities, and lots more!

Author books

Alphabet Mystery
Alphabet Adventure
The Big Hungry Bear
Birdsong
The Big Blue Sea
The Napping House
Piggies
Quick as a Cricket
Rude Giants
Silly Sally
Scaredy Cats
King Bidgood's in the Bathtub
More fun with *Alphabet Mystery*

**Arts and crafts...** This activity can be done in short 10—15 minute sessions over several weeks. Staple or tape blank sheets of paper together to form a 26-page booklet. Write or help your child write an upper and lowercase letter for each page. Use old magazines or catalogs and have your child cut or tear out pictures of things that begin with that letter. Glue into the book. Invite your child to “read” the book when it is finished!

**Out and about...** Play I Spy with the first letter of your child’s name. “I spy with my little eye a “B” on that sign!” “Can you spy other letter B’s?” You can also play the game with letter sounds. “I spy with my little eye something that begins with a ‘buh’ sound, just like your name.” If your child knows the beginning sounds pretty well, play the game with ending sounds.

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**Try this song:**

**Fast ABCs**

*Start this song by slapping your hands on your thighs, and sing quickly)*

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXY,

(clap, clap)

NOPQRSTU VWXYZ.

Jack and Jill went up the hill
To fetch a pail of water...

Jack fell down and broke his crown
And Jill came tumbling after!

Oh!

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXY,

(clap, clap)

NOPQRSTU VWXYZ.

*From The Big Book of Stories, Songs, and Sing-Alongs, by Beth Maddigan*

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**Did you know...?**

Idaho public school children in kindergarten through 3rd Grade are given a short reading assessment each year in the fall and spring. This assessment is called the Idaho Reading Indicator (IRI), and it allows teachers and parents to monitor and provide support to young children as they learn to read.

By March/April, kindergarten children are expected to name most capital and lowercase letters and know the sounds of several consonants and vowels.

Your child’s teacher can tell you more about end-of-year reading expectations and how to support your child at home.

Reading alphabet books with your child is a great way to practice naming letters and letter sounds!

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**What your library can do for you...**

Don’t have a library card? You can still visit your library for storytimes or to read with your child. Or you can ask your librarian about how to apply for your own card today!

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