

Did you know...



Children who go to kindergarten knowing the shapes and names of the letters of the alphabet have a much easier time learning to read. Knowing the names and shapes of letters is called “letter” or “alphabetic” knowledge.

By the time your child begins kindergarten he or she should know most of the letters of the alphabet, especially those in his or her name. There are many ways to learn and practice letter recognition, and they should be more play-based than drills. When children can make a connection with the letter because of what it represents, they are able to keep and use that information in a meaningful way.



Here's how...

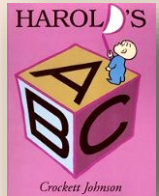


- ❖ Young children usually learn the letters in their name first. They are their favorite letters! Write your child's name where he or she can see it often, and have your child write his or her name in their own way. You can support them with a name model or spelling it out loud.
- ❖ Point out and name letters when reading books, signs or labels. There are many signs out in the community that have letters that children recognize and relate to.
- ❖ Sing the alphabet song together and play with rhymes. Sing the song in different ways so the letter sounds are more clear— soft, loud, deep, high, slow, fast, or to different tunes.

Read



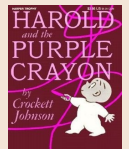
Harold's ABC, by Crockett Johnson



Join Harold and his purple crayon for an alphabet adventure. Children are introduced to each letter of the alphabet along with a corresponding drawing. The letter K cleverly turns into a kite. Alphabet books are a great way for children to increase their vocabulary by introducing new words.

Crockett Johnson is the author and illustrator of several books about Harold and his purple crayon:

Harold and the Purple Crayon
Harold's Fairy Tale
Harold's Trip to the Sky
Harold at the North Pole
Harold's Circus
A Picture for Harold's Room



Choosing Books



Some alphabet books to look for at the library:

ABC, I Like Me! by Nancy Carlson
Alphabet Rescue, by Audrey Wood
Alphabet Under Construction, by Denise Fleming
Chicka Chicka Boom Boom, by Bill Martin, Jr. and John Archambault
Eating the Alphabet, by Lois Ehlert
I Stink! by Kate McMullan
Shout! Shout it Out! by Denise Fleming

Talk



Harold's ABC and other children's picture books contain more "rare" words than what is heard on television throughout the day. As you read with your child each day talk about some of the rare words you run across, such as "gesture" or "trudged." If you're not sure what the word means, look it up together or ask someone else. This is good modeling for your child for when she finds a word she doesn't know.

Write



On a blank piece of paper, draw a squiggly line or the beginning of a shape. Ask your child to use his imagination to finish the drawing. You can play, too!



Play



The PBS Kids website has lots of online games that teach letter knowledge. The games involve popular PBS characters, and are meant to be played with parent interaction. Check it out at <http://pbskids.org/games/abc/>

Preschool children should interact with screens for less than two hours per day. Try playing an online game or two with your child, then turn off the computer and sing songs or do something active together. Try this (*match actions to words*):

Shake My Sillies Out

I'm going to shake, shake, shake my sillies out,
Shake, shake, shake my sillies out.
Shake, shake, shake my sillies out,
And wiggle my waggles away!

Additional verses:

Clap, clap, clap my crazies out...

Jump, jump, jump my jiggles out...

Stretch, stretch, stretch my stretchies out...

Sing



A word about the ABC song...

**A B C D E F G, H I J K ElemenPea
Q R S, T U V, W, X, Y and Z**

Parents often think their child "knows" the alphabet because they can sing the ABC song and/or recite the alphabet, or because the child can point to the letters in order while singing or saying the alphabet.

Being able to do those things can show that a child has some knowledge about the alphabet, but children with good letter knowledge can identify letters in any order.

Sing

Instead of singing to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," try singing to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb."

ABCDEFG
HIJ
KLM
NOPQRST
UVWXY and Z.

At your library...



You can read hundreds of free online books with your child by visiting your local library's website and clicking on Tumblebooks™.

