

## 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.

By the time your child begins kindergarten, he or she should know many of the letters of the alphabet, especially those in his or her name. Your child should be able to identify letters in *any* order, not just in order from A, B, C, D, E ...

There are many ways to learn the shapes and names of letters, which should be play-based rather than drills, like flash cards. Children should make connections with letters in meaningful ways.

## Here's how ...

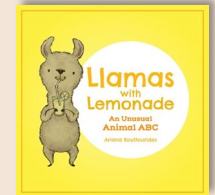


- ✦ Learning shapes is one of the basic skills children need to know before they learn letters of the alphabet. Point out shapes in books and as you're out and about.
- ✦ Young children usually learn the letters in their name first. They are their favorite letters! Write your child's name where he or she can see it often and have your child write his or her name in their own way.
- ✦ Point out and name letters when reading books, signs, or labels. There are many signs out in the community which have letters that children recognize and relate to.
- ✦ Teach your child to draw straight and curvy lines, then shapes such as circles and triangles, which are the strokes a pencil makes to form letters.
- ✦ Read alphabet books with your child.

## Read



### ***Llamas with Lemonade: An Unusual ABC*** by Ariana Koultourides



An adorable parade of animals and their unusual objects help young children learn uppercase and lowercase letters. As you read with your child, talk about the pictures, and ask them, "What other objects start with this letter sound?"

## Choosing Books



### **Other Alphabet Books:**

*ABC, I Like Me!* by Nancy Carlson

*B Is for Bulldozer* by June Sobel

*Bear Is Awake!* by Hannah E. Harrison

*Cement Mixer's ABC* by Sherri Duskey Rinker

*Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* by Bill Martin, Jr.

*Click, Clack, Quackity-Quack* by Doreen Cronin

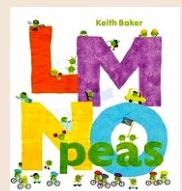
*Eating the Alphabet* by Lois Ehlert

*G Is for Goat* by Patricia Polacco

*I Spy Letters* by Jean Marzollo

*LMNO Peas* by Keith Baker

*Oops, Pounce, Quick, Run! An Alphabet Caper* by Mike Twohy



## Talk



Talk about how two toys are alike and different. “How are these two balls alike? How are they different?” Helping your child see how objects are the same and how they are different will help them see how letters are the same and/or different, such as **d** and **b**, or **P** and **R**.

## Write



Pour some uncooked rice in a cookie sheet and shake it until it's all flat. Let your child practice writing letters in the rice with their finger, shaking the pan after each one to re-set the rice.

## 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.”

ABCDEFGH

HIJ

KLM

NOPQRST

UVWXY and Z.

## Play



All Idaho children are given a short test called the Idaho Reading Indicator when they start kindergarten. Your child should be able to point out upper and lowercase letters in the alphabet when they hear them said aloud and also know some sounds letters make. Begin working on these things now while your child is in preschool.

Magnet letters that stick to your refrigerator are a fun way to play with letters. If you don't own a set, ask your local library if they have some that can be checked out.



## At your library ...



Don't have a library card? You can still visit your library for storytimes or to read with your child. Ask your librarian how to apply for your own card today!