

## 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 most 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 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 ...

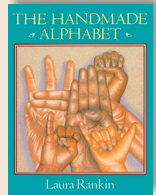


- ✦ Learning shapes is one of the basic skills children need to know before they learn letters of the alphabet. Point out shapes in books as you're out and about.
- ✦ Young children usually learn the letters in their name first. They are their favorite letters! Write your child's name where he or she 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.
- ✦ Read alphabet and shape books with your child.

## Read



### ***The Handmade Alphabet*** by Laura Rankin



This alphabet book includes beautiful illustrations of how each letter looks in American Sign Language, paired with an object that begins with that letter. Talk about the letter on each page with your child, say the name of the object, think of other words that begin with that letter, and practice making the letter with your hand and fingers.

See a video of how to sign the alphabet:

[https://youtu.be/bFv\\_mLwBvHc](https://youtu.be/bFv_mLwBvHc)

Other books by Laura Rankin:

*The Handmade Counting Book*

*Fluffy and Baron*

*Ruthie and the (Not So) Teeny Tiny Lie*

## Choosing Books



### **More alphabet books:**

*A Was Once an Apple Pie* by Edward Lear

*Animal ABC* by Marcus Pfister

*B Is for Bulldozer* by June Sobel

*Bear Is Awake!* by Hannah E. Harrison

*Dig Dig Digging ABC* by Margaret Mayo

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

*"R" Is for Rocket: An ABC Book* by Tad Hills

*The Turn Around, Upside-Down Alphabet Book* by Lisa Campbell Ernst

## Talk



### **A word about the ABC song ...**

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.

Read alphabet books together and find letters on the pages, and try singing the ABC song to different tunes (see **Sing**).

## Write



Some of the first letters a child learns are those in their name. Help your preschooler write their name as often as possible. Let them sign notes or greeting cards, label their clothing or toys, make the letters in playdough or clay, paint the letters with water... Help them find those letters in other places, too, such as on street signs or at the grocery store.

## 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.

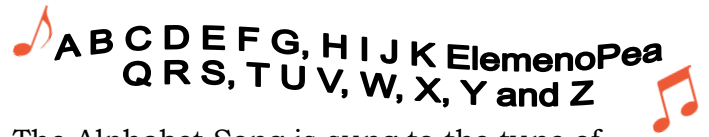
Magnet letters that stick to your refrigerator are a fun way to play with letters. If you don't own a set, ask your local library if they have some that can be checked out.



## Sing



### **The ABC Song**



The Alphabet Song is sung to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." Instead, try singing to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to break the words up differently.

ABCDEFG

HIJ

KLM

NOPQRST

UVWXY and Z.

Hear tune at [www.thelearninggroove.com/mary-had-a-little-lamb](http://www.thelearninggroove.com/mary-had-a-little-lamb)

## At your library ...



Your family is welcome in the library, and your librarians care very much about you and your children. They are committed to helping every child get a great start, succeed in school, and create lifelong learners.

**Libraries are for everyone!**