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Use Food To Teach Your Child The Alphabet

By Deanna Mascle

Teaching your young child the alphabet should be a high priority. Your child should not wait until preschool or kindergarten to learn their letters. Knowledge of their ABCs is one of the prime indicators of reading success for children.

When you work on the alphabet with your child, make sure the child can recognize all the letters of the alphabet both in order and out of sequence plus both upper and lower case. In addition, as the child grows more comfortable with the letters begin introducing the various sounds that go along with the letters. It easy to then take a step closer to reading by naming words that also begin with that letter or sound.

While many parents succumb to the temptation of buying expensive learning aids these are not necessary and may well provide more distraction than aid for the learning process. Instead simply invest in a set of plastic refrigerator magnets and call it a day. Coloring sheets are available for free on the Internet so why spend a lot of money on expensive programs?

The best, and cheapest, method is simply using the world around you and simple, familiar items available at home. One fun easy method is to use food. You have food in your kitchen and you need to feed your child several times a day so why not combine lessons with snacks and meals?

Your food lessons plans can be as complicated or as simple as you would like.

Initially you may choose to simply serve foods that begin with the "letter of the day", such as B for Banana and A for Apple and M for Marshmallow and so on.

As your child grows more adept at the alphabet then you can have the child tell you what letters are on her plate, such as S for Spaghetti or E for Eggs.

While most parents don't encourage their children to play with their food you can make an exception for certain lessons. Make homemade pretzels or breadsticks in the shape of various letters. Use icing to decorate cookies or cupcakes with letters. Allowing children to experience the alphabet through

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taste, touch, and manipulation will help cement the knowledge.

The truth is that the best way to teach your child the alphabet is to make it a regular part of your daily life. If your child experiences the alphabet in various ways and through a variety of methods then they will be more confident of their knowledge of their ABCs and will have a much easier time building on that knowledge as they develop other emergent literacy skills. Giving your son an apple and incorporating that apple into a lesson about the letter A will feed both his brain and his body.

Deanna Mascle shares more tips about teaching the alphabet in her blog at

<http://HowToTeachTheAlphabet.info>

Teach Phonemic Awareness in 5 Minutes a day

By Sacha of home-school-reading.com

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Phonemic Awareness, or Phonic Ears, are the child's ability to actually hear the sounds in a word. This is the first step in learning to read. Much of the new research says that teaching children this skill can really help the child learn to read!

Let's start growing those ears

Phonic ears is the ability to hear and manipulate sounds in words. Phonemic awareness is not phonics and it does not involve reading any words. This means that a three year old can learn to grow their phonic ears, just as easily as a six year old!

How to teach Phonemic Awareness Skills

- 1) Blending: What word am I trying to say? SsssssAaaaaaNnnnnnDdddd.
- 2) Segmentation (first sound only): What is the first sound in Run?
- 3) Segmentation (last sound only): What is the last sound in Sit?
- 4) Say it Fast (complete): Say the sounds for the word H . . . O . . . P . . . (Pause between each sound.)
- 5) Say letters, sound at a time: The letter "M" is eee . . . mmm. The letter "S" is eee . . . sss.

How to grow those phonic ears in Five Minutes a day

One great thing you can do to help your child, or students learn more about phonemic awareness is read stories outloud to them, but do it a little differently. One time on every page take a word that is 3 or 4 letters, and say it a part at a time. Look below for an example.

Let's say you are reading a story about Sam, the cat. Here is what you will say:

"Sam the cat was having a very good day. First his friend gave him M . . . I . . . L . . . K. What did the friend give Sam? (Child responds) Yes, MILK. Then (keep on reading.)"

Important, you are saying the SOUNDS in the letter MILK, not the Letter Names.

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Once this has become easy, start reading alphabet books with the child, but do each of the letters, one part at a time. You will notice that this will help your child learn the SOUNDS that each letter makes.

Once your child has learned these skills, s/he is ready to start learning to read! Start today! Teach your child to grow their phonic ears through these easy tips.

Sacha Luria-Smith has been recognized for her teaching success on National Public Radio and Disney radio. She has also taught middle school in Oakland, CA. She is the author of the website <http://www.home-school-reading.com>.



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