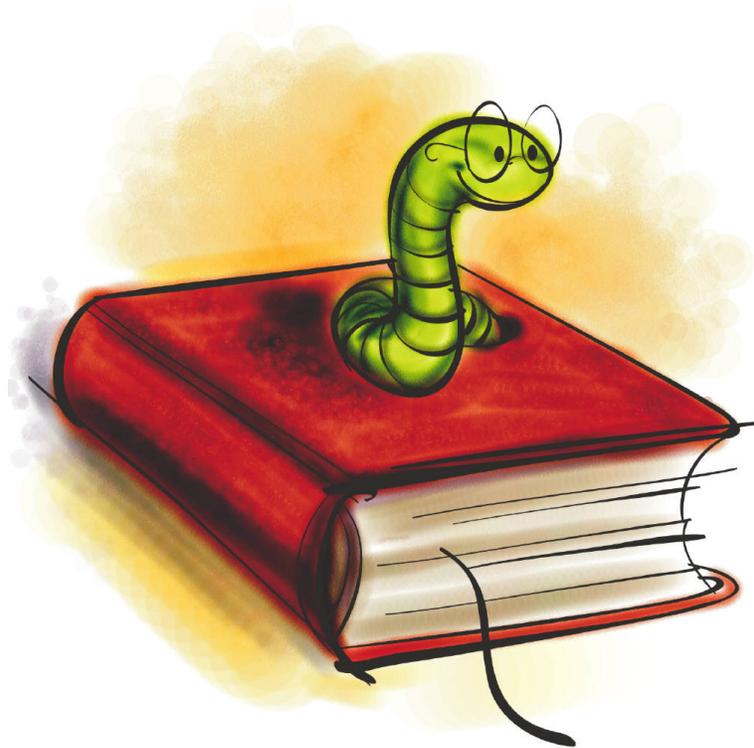




Ontario

Home Made Literacy

Fun ideas to promote early literacy



Presented by the York Region Early Literacy Specialists

Find 30+ more tip sheets at:

<http://familydaycare.com/early-literacy/early-literacy-resources/>

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Remember to make learning fun. If an activity is too difficult, it won't be fun, and your child will not want to play. Also, when your child likes a game, you'll get tired of it before he does!

1. Fishing for Letters (or shapes, colours or numbers, etc.)

Learning: letter recognition, fine motor skills, eye-hand co-ordination, exploration of magnetic properties, turn-taking

Materials:

- Metal lids from frozen juice concentrate or paper clips
- Paper and crayons or markers, or alphabet stickers
- String
- Sticks for fishing rods (chopsticks or wooden spoons)
- Magnets (beware choking hazard)

To make:

1. Create alphabet fish by sticking letters on the juice lids
2. Use clear print, and either upper or lower case letters
3. Tie a string to each stick.
4. Tie a magnet on the other end of each string.

To play:

1. Take turns catching letters. What sound does your letter make?
2. Can you think of a word that starts with your letter?
3. Can you catch the letter that starts your name? Can you catch the first letter of anyone else's name?
4. Throw the fish back in the lake or put them aside until they're all caught.

Adaptations:

- Draw letters (or print from your computer) on sturdy paper, and cut them out in the shape of fish. Attach a paperclip to each fish (and tape for safety) for the magnet to stick to.
- Print the vowels in different colours.
- Print multiple copies of popular letters.
- Make the "fish" as triangles, crescents, squares, etc. to learn shapes.
- Catch things other than fish ... shapes, pictures, numbers...etc
- If using pictures try to use real life, relevant images (a picture of the family dog, a picture of a real penguin...etc).



2. Label/Sign Matching and Memory Game

Learning: Environmental print awareness, letter recognition, vocabulary building, turn-taking, fine motor skills, numeracy skills, social skills.

Materials:

- Pairs of same-sized labels from familiar foods (cereal, soup, takeout foods) and/or logos of familiar stores or products from flyers (No-Frills, Zellers, Home Depot, Honda, Toronto Maple Leafs, GM, Canadian Tire, etc.)
- Sturdy paper such as construction paper or cardboard
- Glue and Scissors

To Make:

1. Cut out two of each same-sized label or logo.
2. Glue them on identically cut rectangles of construction paper, printer paper, Bristol board, playing cards...etc

To Play:

1. Go over all of the labels/words/logos with your child to make sure you know them. You can have fun figuring them out.
2. Decide how many pairs to use in the game, based on your child's age and experience playing this game. With beginners, it's a good idea to only use three or four pairs, so that they achieve success early on.
3. Shuffle the cards to make sure that they're not in pairs.
4. Place the cards face down, in a grid formation on the floor. Add to the learning by counting them out as you place them. You can count in different languages too.
5. Decide who is going to go first. This is a social skill that children need. You might choose the youngest person or flip a coin.
6. On his or her turn, each player turns over two cards. If they are the same, keep the matching pair. If they are not a match, the player turns them back over and the next player goes.
7. Play continues until all the pairs are matched.
8. Count up the pairs that each player matched.



3. Letter Laundry Basket

Learning: Letter recognition, letter sounds, vocabulary

Materials:

- Laundry basket
- Card with a letter written on it

To Make:

Write a letter that your child is learning on a card and place it at the front of the laundry basket.

To Play:

1. Have your child draw the letter you are using or have them trace over the letter that you have drawn
2. Sound out the letter with your child "A says ahh" then explain the rules of the game to your child
3. Have your child go around the house and find things that start with the chosen letter
4. After they are done go through each item Apple says 'Ahh-pple'...etc

Adaptations:

1. For younger children try this game with a chosen colour instead of letter
2. Try this game with a number ... Can you find things that come in threes in the house (3 pencils, 3 balls...etc)



4. Searching for Letters

Learning: letter recognition, letter sounds, number sense and numeration, fine motor skills

Materials:

- Flyers or newspaper page
- Marker

To Play:

1. Choose a letter that your child is learning. Circle that letter somewhere on the page.
2. Give your child the marker and ask her to find and circle as many of that letter as she can.
3. Count how many you can find.

Adaptation:

1. Try to start with a letter that is most relevant to your child when teaching letter recognition, (first letter of their name, second letter of their name...etc)
2. Take another coloured marker and choose another letter to find.
3. When you have found as many letters as you can, count them up and compare that number to the first number. Which letter was found the most?



5. Letters by Feel

Learning: Cognitive development, letter recognition, letter sounds

Materials:

- Magnetic letters
- Sock or cloth bag

To Play:

1. Put two or three letters that your child knows in the sock.
2. Say a letter you want your child to find by feel.
3. Add more letters as your child's letter knowledge strengthens

Adaptation:

1. Write all of the letters, either upper or lower case on little squares of cardboard. Put them in the sock.
2. Have your child pull out a letter.
3. Say the name and sound of the letter.
4. Think of something that starts with that letter.

6. Name Rubbings

Learning: Name and letter recognition, fine motor skills

Materials:

- Masking tape
- Smooth table or other surface
- Paper
- Crayons

To Play:

1. Use masking tape to print your child's name on a table.
2. Have your child trace the letters with her finger and say the letters.
3. Cover his name with newsprint. You may have to tape it down to keep it in place.
4. Show your child how to rub over the top of the masking tape with the side of a peeled crayon to make a rubbing of their name.

Adaption:

- Write you child's name with a wax candle on paper and have her paint over it with a dark water colour. It will shine through!
- Try this rubbing activity with a leaf or patterned print instead of masking tape, it will work too!



7. Bathtub Letters (or shapes or numbers)

Learning: letter recognition, fine motor skills

Materials:

- Soap
- Back

To Play:

1. Soap up your child's back.
2. With your finger, draw a letter or shape on his back.
3. Have him guess what you drew!
4. If you can fit in the tub, have him draw letters on your back too.

Adaptations:

- Practice letters and numbers on the side of the tub
- Try making some bathtub paint!

Ingredients:

- 1 Cup of Dish Soap
- 1/2 Cup of Cornstarch
- 1/2 Cup of Water
- Dye - we used food coloring

Directions:

1. In a sauce pan, mix the cornstarch into the cold water until it is dissolved – it should still be a bit pasty, but not clumpy. Then turn up the heat and bring the cornstarch water to a boil – stir constantly to make sure there are no chunks.
2. Add the soap and mix, heating on medium temperature until just boiling. The soap should have a gel-like consistency as it cools.
3. Add food coloring. We have found that food coloring has the best results, but have also used tempera paint, really anything water-based should work fine to color the cornstarch/soap base.
4. Store your paint in an airtight container. The paint will separate slightly when stored, stir well before use. Test the paint on a patch of your tub to ensure that your food coloring does not stain - and have fun!

OR

Get an ice cube tray and squirt some shaving cream into each square. Add a drop or two of different colours of food colouring into each square and mix... ensure not to use too much food colouring as it can dye

8. Action Cards!

Learning: word recognition/reading, following directions, learning about verbs, listening, gross motor, fine motor skills, vocabulary

Materials:

- Index cards
- Marker

To Play:

1. Together with the child think up a variety of **action** words (see attached words for ideas).
2. As you think them let your child see you write them on index cards.
3. Mix up the cards face down. Start with only two or three.
4. Choose one and act it out.

Adaptations:

- Make a life size version of this game outside with chalk on the driveway/sidewalk
- Throw a bean bag and act out whichever square it lands on

Sample Action Words

jump	spin	snap	wink
hop	smile	sing	sleep
skip	clap	grunt	turn
bow	twirl	tap	sit
laugh	cry	bend	march
run	bark	grin	freeze
dance	reach	skate	blink

9. Sound Mat- "Rhymers will be Readers!"

Learning: blending sounds and adding sounds, eye-hand co-ordination, vocabulary, turn-taking

Materials:

- Paper
- Markers
- Bean bag or kitchen scrubber, or other small object

To Make:

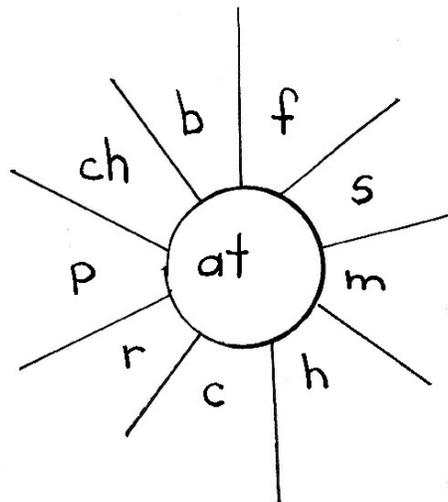
- Start by making a sound mat with very simple letter combinations.
- Put the end sound in the circle at centre, and surround the sound with beginning letters that make a word when blended together (see below).
- Some other simple blends are "an", "ar", "op", and "it".

To Play:

1. Read centre sound and all surrounding sounds.
2. Have your child toss object onto a surrounding sound and combine it with centre sound to make a new word.
3. Make a silly sentence with the word in it!
4. Then you or the next child takes a turn.

Adaptation:

Make sound mat on pavement with sidewalk chalk. Throw a rock or small object to surrounding sound and jump to that letter. Combine the surrounding sound with centre sound to make the word



10. Why Play Games?

Organized games are an extension of a child's natural way of learning. Through the social interaction of playing a game a child can ...

- Develop eye hand co-ordination
- Strengthen small and large motor development
 - Expand his problem solving
- Build self esteem as her skill increases
 - Understand the concept of rules
- Learn to follow rules in order to play
 - Practice taking turns
- Develop language and math skills
- Learn the concept of setting goals
 - Strengthen sense of team work
- Develop an understanding of winning and losing
 - Deepen her sense of culture
 - Build family relationships
 - Have fun!