

Letter of the Day

Children notice the shapes of letters when they do alphabet puzzles or use letter-shaped cookie cutters in damp sand or play dough. Magnetic letters and alphabet blocks allow children to explore letter-sound connections, arrange and rearrange letters to form words, and become more aware of the sequences of sounds within words.

Children will also notice lots of familiar print in the environment, for example shop or restaurant logos. Your child may recognise some of these below. Children usually begin to notice other words which start with the initial letter of their name. When they are at this stage and showing interest, they are ready to explore more letters.



Children need to learn the names of letters as well as the sounds they make.

The names of letters in English can be very different from the sounds they make in words. Reading to children is often the best way to reinforce letter-sound connections. You can help by pointing to the print as you share picture books. Alphabet books are especially useful, since they often include pictures of words that begin with the letter name. With lots of experience of sharing books together, children will begin to notice the difference between capital and lower case letters.

Children could watch a video to hear the difference between the letter names and the sounds they make. The following video is helpful to illustrate this, although it includes the American pronunciation of Z. You can talk with your child about the difference and point out that in English the letter name is "Zed."

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ezdSqXROWOA>

Here is a game to help children practise letter sounds.



- Pick a letter
- Say the sound of the letter with your family.
- Now have a look around your home and garden and see how many things you can spot beginning with that letter.

I tried this at my house. I picked the letter **D** for Daneen. I found lots of items beginning with the letter **D**. Here are some things I found:

- Door
- Door mat
- Desk
- Dog
- DVD player
- DVDs
- Deck

Can you write your chosen letter?

You can use pens and paper or why not get messy and try using shaving foam? Spray the shaving foam onto a baking tray and use your finger to write your letter in the foam. You could also use porridge oats, rice or lentils.



You can help your child at home by:

- Not pushing your child to write before they are ready, but waiting until they show interest. Your child may start to produce scribble writing or may ask you to help by writing words or letters for them to copy.
- Being aware that physical development is crucial to be able to control small movements of their hands and that this does not necessarily develop alongside intellectual, social and emotional development.
- Recognising that all stages of writing are important and to be valued – scribbling is to writing as babbling is to talking
- Praising all their efforts. Valuing any interest your child shows in making marks on paper/using their fingers to “write” pretend letters or symbols, e.g. in sand trays or on steamed up windows
- Setting an example by letting your child see you writing for a purpose, e.g. making a shopping list or writing invitations to a party
- Encouraging children to use the top left corner to start writing. This ensures that the writing will follow the English language convention (top to bottom and left to right)
- Your child may initially use capitals as they are easier to form. Once they are confident, encourage your child to use a capital letter for the start of the name and then lower case (e.g. Simon and not SIMON)
- Encouraging your child to look at familiar words in the environment and the letters they are made up of, e.g. shop signs, food labels in supermarkets, Bus Stop etc.

Skills your child will learn from this experience:

- I show an interest in print, texts and pictures
- I can recognise some letters
- I can state some letter sounds and names
- I can recognise and name familiar signs, labels, notices and logos
- I can select and use mark making materials **to write**
- I can write in separate marks maybe letter like
- I can experiment with writing my own name

I explore sounds, letters and words, discovering how they work together, and I use what I learn to help me read and write

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