

Help your child to learn the alphabet with these quick and easy activities

A theme based on the 'alphabet' can be used to develop an extensive range of exciting play and craft activities across the curriculum at home or in the setting. For example, creative skills can be developed by painting colourful pictures for an alphabet frieze, reading skills can be encouraged while

making and using 'sound' cards for playing simple letter matching games such as 'Letter pairs' and 'Alphabet snap', and social skills can be developed while taking turns to find and identify letters of the alphabet that have been 'hidden' in a sand tray or around the room.

Alphabet file

Encourage your child's literacy skills by helping them to label a sheet of A4 paper with a bold letter 'a'. Invite them to look through old comics and magazines to find interesting pictures showing objects that begin with the letter 'a'.

Help your child to cut out and glue the pictures on to the labelled paper and place in a file to create the first page of a homemade alphabet booklet. Over time, help your child to construct other pages, labelled 'b' to 'z' to complete the file.

Top tip: Invite your child to decorate a front cover for the book with a special title, such as 'Emily's alphabet' or 'Tom's a b c'.



Alphabet counters

Play the game on the 'Alphabet counters' photocopiable sheet together to encourage your child's reading skills. Photocopy or glue the alphabet chart on to card, then cut out each square to create 26 counters. Scatter the counters face down. Take turns to reveal one counter at a time and say the correct sound, for example, "'a' for apple'. If you say the sound incorrectly, the player must put the counter back down and turn it over. The winner is the player with the most letters or just play for fun.

Top tip: Introduce three teddies into the game and invite your child to take the teddies' turns. Your child will then be saying letter sounds four times out of five during each game.

Colourful letters

Develop your child's creative skills by helping them to draw the first letter of their name on to a sheet of card. Encourage them to decorate the letter with paints, crayons or collage materials such as tissue paper, colourful fabric, sequins and beads. Trim around the shape and hang it in a special place. Gradually add other decorated letters until the display spells your child's full name, initials or even the whole alphabet.

Top tip: Cut out cardboard letter shapes for younger children to decorate.



Jenni Tavener is an early years teacher and writer.

Useful books and resources

Alphabet Lotto Game Boards are available from Hope Education, call 0845-120 2224 or visit www.hope-education.co.uk



Kipper's A to Z by Mick Inkpen (Hodder Children's Books).
Alphabet Fun (10 Minute Ideas series, Scholastic).
I Spy an Alphabet (First Steps with Ladybird series, Ladybird).