Especially for parents of preschoolers!

A Is for *Apple*

Rhymes and Sound Awareness

Before preschoolers can learn to read, they need to become familiar with letter sounds. Linking letter sounds with pictures is a great way to introduce your young child to the alphabet.

What is the practice?

While looking at picture books with your preschooler, have her name the pictures. Repeat the name of the picture while stressing the word's first letter sound. Have your child repeat the first letter with you. Alphabet books that show each alphabet letter by itself will help your child learn to identify written letters.

What does the practice look like?

There are many ways to help your child connect a picture of something with the first letter of its name. For example, a book might have a picture of a lion and a big letter *L* on a page. This can help a child connect the picture with the letter and with the *Lll* sound he hears when you read the word "lion" to him. Reading and sharing books with your preschooler is a great time to label objects and talk about letter sounds.

How do you do the practice?

- Follow your child's interests when choosing books or other reading materials. If your preschooler likes horses, for example, read a book or a magazine about horses. Point to and talk about the pictures. When you point to a picture of a saddle, ask what letter or letter sound begins the word *saddle*. Be patient with your child.
- Take turns naming pictures in a book. Ask your child to listen closely to the first sounds of their names. When you find a barn, for example, help your child "stretch out" the sounds in *barn* and hear the *Bbb* sound.
- Once your child "hears" the first sound in a word, have him think of other words with the same sound. Look through the book for pictures of other things whose names begin with *B* and say them together.

How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your child becoming familiar with letter sounds?
- Does your child show more interest in books?
- Is your child becoming aware of letters, letter sounds, and words?

CELL practices
CENTER for EARLY LITERACY LEARNING

Take a look at more letters and sounds

A Favorite Book

Three-year-old Lily picks up a book for her mom to read to her and her big sister, Daisy. It is an alphabet book that Lily's mom has read to them again and again. Lily likes it because it has big, bright, colorful pictures and she never tires of looking at it. Lily hands the book to her mom. "Do you want me to read your favorite book again, Lily?" "Yes, Momma, read it." Mom reads the book the way she always does, stressing the rhyming words and letter sounds. This delights her daughters. When they finish the book, Lily smiles and begs excitedly, "Read it again, Momma!"

One More Time!

Daniel, age 4, loves to look at books and turn pages. He even likes to play with his books, stacking them on top of each other. Every night at bedtime his mom reads him a book. Today it is an alphabet book. Daniel's mom reads a page, then points to the pictures on the page and names them. She points to the letter *A* and encourages Daniel to name things on the page that begin with that letter. Daniel points to pictures if he doesn't know the words for them, and his mom stresses the beginning *Aaa* sound as she says their names. When Mom finishes the book, she puts it down. Daniel picks it up and hands it back to her. "One more time, please!" he says.

Letters and Signs

Four-year-old Jacob is deaf. His mom and dad have been using sign language with him since he was born. It is right before lunch and Jacob is sitting at the kitchen table looking at books. Jacob's dad is making lunch. Mom sits down with Jacob and asks him in sign if he would like her to read him a book. Jacob bobs his right hand in the sign for ***yes***. Jacob chooses an alphabet book about animals for his mom to read to him. She points to each picture and letter and then makes the letter sign. She also points to the pictures on each page and signs their names. Jacob chooses to sign a few of the letters with his mom.

IDEAs that Work

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