

Especially for parents of preschoolers! 

Listen Hear

 Letters and Spelling

Before your preschooler begins to read or spell, she must learn the letters of the alphabet and their sounds. Learning letter/sound matches helps prepare preschoolers for reading.

What is the practice?

Introduce your preschooler to letters and their sounds. Sounding out letters as you name, point to, or draw the letters helps preschoolers connect a letter and its sound. Alphabet and letter/sound recognition help your preschooler to have early reading success.

What does the practice look like?

Follow your child's interest. Everyday play activities can help your child learn letter sounds. Use books, games, and alphabet toys such as ABC stamps and magnetic letters to discuss letters and their sounds.

How do you do the practice?

Start with games, books, and activities that interest your child. While your child is playing, help her to notice the letters around her and make letter sounds. Remember to be supportive and encouraging while your preschooler learns letter sounds, as it may take time.

- Share an alphabet book with your child and ask her to say the letter sounds with you. Encourage your child to think of more words that start with a particular letter.
- Play games such as *I Spy* using letters and their sounds. "I spy something that starts with the letter *B*. Remember what sound a *B* makes? *Bbb*, *Bbb*, can you guess what I'm looking at?"
- Use chalk to write letters in each square of a sidewalk hopscotch grid. Your child can say the name of each letter and something that starts with that letter sound as she hops from square to square.
- Have your child help you write a grocery list and ask her what letter certain items start with. If she doesn't know, you can help her out. Learning letters and their sounds takes time.



How do you know the practice worked?

- Is your preschooler enthusiastic about letters?
- Does your preschooler know some letter sounds?
- Is your preschooler interested in "writing" letters?

Take a look at more listening for letter sounds

Play Dough Letters

Four-year-old Maria loves to play with play dough. She uses letter-shaped cookie cutters to make impressions in the dough. Maria's mom notices how involved she is in her play. Mom sits down beside her daughter and points to the *M* that Maria has cut out. "There is a letter *M* for *Maria*," she says. Mom makes a *Mmmmm* sound and says, "That's the first letter and the first sound in your name." Areli's eyes light up and she says, "Let's make all my letters! All my sounds!"



Alphabet Puzzle

Four-year-old Miguel loves to put together puzzles. His grandmother asks him if he wants to help her put together an alphabet puzzle. They sit together on the living room floor and take turns putting the puzzle pieces together. For each piece they pick up, Miguel's grandmother says the name of the letter and makes its sound. She asks him, "Do you think you could help me make the letter sounds?" "Yeah!" Miguel says as he enjoys the one-on-one attention from his grandmother. Miguel thinks it's fun to make the letter sounds with her, and he likes to sound them out loudly.

That's the Point

Four-year-old Marlee has language delays. She loves looking at books and pictures. Her mom spots Marlee looking at an alphabet book. She sits down beside Marlee on the floor. She points to the letters on the page and sounds each one out. Marlee is very observant, but not very vocal. After naming the letters, Marlee's mom asks, "Can you point to the letter *T*?" Marlee looks at the page. After a few moments, she points to the letter *T*. "Good job, Marlee! Do you remember what sounds the letter *T* makes?" Mom then makes a *Ttt* sound.

