

Suggested At-Home Activities for Phonics

Phonics is the relationships between the letters of written language and the sounds of spoken language. Children's reading development is dependent on their understanding of the alphabetic principle — the idea that letters and letter patterns represent the sounds of spoken language. Below are a list of suggested activities you can do at home to help your child with phonics.

- ❑ Make letter-sounds and have your child write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- ❑ Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters “p-e-n” spell pen, how do you spell hen?)
- ❑ Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your child say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter d)
- ❑ Teach your child to match the letters in his/her name with the sounds in his/her name.
- ❑ Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your child practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, “I am thinking of something that starts with /t/.”
- ❑ Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach into the bag and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- ❑ Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your child guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your child say the letter name and make the sound. (For example, the letter m matches the /m/ sound as in man.)
- ❑ Make letter-sounds and ask your child to draw the match letters in sand, shaving cream, cornmeal, etc.
- ❑ Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabets in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your child to pick out the letters that match those sounds.
- ❑ Building words-Using magnetic letters, make a three letter word on the refrigerator (cat). Have your child read the word and use it in a sentence. Every day, change one letter to make a new word. Start by changing only the beginning letter (cat, bat, hat, sat, mat, rat, pat). Then change only the ending letter (pat, pal, pad, pan). Finally, change only the middle letter (pan, pen, pin, pun).
- ❑ Make alphabet letters out of play dough.
- ❑ Write letters with your finger on your child’s back. Have your child do the same to you.
- ❑ Making Words-For this game, you will need magnetic letters and three bags. Put half of the consonants into the first bag. Put the vowels into the middle bag, and put the remaining consonants into the last bag. Have your child pull one letter from the first bag. That will be the first letter of their word. Then have your child pull from the vowel

bag for the second letter of the word and from the other consonant bag for the third letter of the word. Next, the child will read the word and decide if it is a real word or a nonsense word. Take turns, replacing the vowels as needed until there are no more consonants left.

- ❑ Writing Words-Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her lunch or place notes on their pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child. Whenever your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.
- ❑ Labeling Words-When reading with your child, keep Post-It notes handy. Every so often, have your child choose one object in the picture and write the word on a Post-It. Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.
- ❑ Practicing words with pictures-Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is /m/, the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, money and microwave.
- ❑ Hints for helping your child sound out words
 - ❑ First sound-Have your child say the first sound in the word and make a guess based on the picture surrounding words. Double check the printed word to see if it matches the child's guess.
 - ❑ Sound and Blend-Have your child say each sound separately (sss aaa t), this is called "sounding it out", and then say the sounds together (sat), this is "blending".
 - ❑ Familiar Parts-When your child starts reading longer words, have him notice the parts of the word that he already knows. For example, in a word such as "presenting" your child may already know the prefix pre-, the word "sent" and the word ending -ing.
- ❑ Ask your child to name stores, restaurants, and other places that have signs. This is called environmental print.
- ❑ Ask your child to look through ads to point out things he/she recognizes. Ask if they know any of the letters on the page.
- ❑ Use stores as an opportunity for learning. Ask questions like, "Can you find something that has a letter C?" "Can you find a word that begins with an M?" Can you find something with 4 letters?" Praise all efforts and keep it like a game.