

THE ALPHABET

Learning the names and sounds of letters of the alphabet is critical for early literacy. Nonetheless, singing the alphabet song is not enough. Children must be able to recognize handwritten letters as well as the letters represented by different fonts found in printed material. In particular, it is important for young children to understand that letters have sounds and by blending them together they form words, words form phrases and phrases form sentences. Knowing the names of letters is of great importance when learning to spell especially when asking how to spell a particular word. Knowing the order of the letters of the alphabet provides a foundation when asked to alphabetize in later years.

IN THE CLASSROOM

The Name Tent

It is best to learn the names of the letters of the alphabet when children can relate those letters to a context. Begin with children's names. Cut a two-pocket colored folder in half. Staple the pocket to close that opening and fold it over to form a tent. On the front of the tent write the child's first name. In the pocket, place letter cards of the child's name. Create a name tent for each child. Have the children sit in a circle with their name in front of them. Have the children take out the letter cards and arrange the letters to form their names. Observe how the children arrange the letters. Do they arrange them from left to right? Do they select the first letter in their name first? Do they begin at the end? Then have students identify the letters of the alphabet guided by prompts, for example, show me an "A" if your name has an "A", show me a "B". The children hold up each letter if it's in their name. Continue in this way until the whole alphabet has been called out. Option: The same can be done with the children's last name.

ABC Jump

Write either each upper or lower-case letter on a large card and laminate. Tape the cards on the floor in alphabetical order in a trail around the room. Have each child jump from card to card in sequence naming each letter she lands on.

ABC Name Book

Create an ABC book using the students' names, for example, A is for Agustin, B is for Beatriz, C is for Cristina and so on. Have students draw their face on the corresponding page. The names of the Caramba Kids or family names can also be included.

ABC Pocket Chart

Place a pocket chart at arm's reach along with alphabet letter cards in a corner of the room. In partners, students arrange the letters of the alphabet in order in the pocket chart. If needed, provide an alphabet chart nearby that students can use as a reference.

ABC Riddle Book

Each day present to the children a riddle. Begin with a riddle in which the response begins with the letter "A." The response to the following riddle would begin with the letter "B" and so forth. Create a book of ABC riddles. The riddle is on one page and the response is revealed with an illustration and the word when the page is turned. Here is an example, *"I am red and round. You can eat me. I have seeds inside of me. Who am I?"* (an apple).

ABC Sort

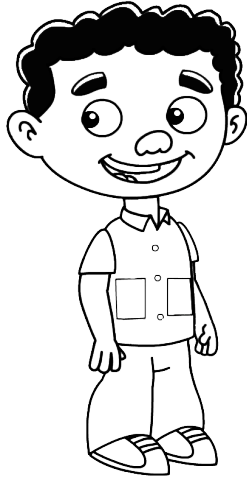
Students sort letter cards typed in different fonts in sorting trays. Instruct students that letters are the same regardless of the way they are represented. Begin with two letters typed in five different fonts. As new letters are introduced, add the new letters to the sort.

Cereal Letters

Provide a piece of construction paper with each letter written in a square. Give students a Ziploc bag with alphabet cereal. Children will sort the cereal letters in the corresponding squares. When finished, children can eat the cereal. Yum!

File Folder Sort

Provide one file folder for each letter of the alphabet. On one side of the folder write a capital letter; on the other side write the lower case letter. Give each student letter cards or magnetic letters. In partners, have the children match the letters. Begin with the upper case letters first. Then have them match the lower case letters. Challenge them later by sorting both upper and lower case letters.



Letter Practice with Water

Write a letter or letters on a chalkboard. Students dip a paintbrush in water and practice writing their letters by erasing the letters you had written.



More Letter Practice with Manipulatives

It's a good idea to have children practice writing their letters using different materials with different textures. You might use sand or salt in plastic containers with a lid. In this way, students can practice writing the letter over and over. Students can also use a piece of chalk to practice writing the letters outside on the cement. One more way students can practice is by forming the letters on a piece of sand paper. The more practice students have forming letters using a variety of manipulatives the faster they will remember the name of the letter and how to write it.

Reading with Jose Luis

Enlarge the song either on chart paper or project it on a document camera. Point to each letter as you sing the song and the children follow along. Through repetition, the children will soon be reading the letters on the chart. Children can come up and identify letters through prompts such as: "Show me which letter is the first letter of your name." "What sound do you hear at the beginning of Lisa and Linda? Show me which letter that is." "What is the last letter of the alphabet?" During choice time let the children use a pointer to point to the letters as they sing *The Alphabet Song*.



COMMON CORE STANDARDS FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS - K

Reading Standards: Foundational Skills

Print Concepts

1. Demonstrate understanding of the organization and basic features of print.
 - a. Follow words from left to right, top to bottom, and page by page.
 - b. Recognize that spoken words are represented in written language by specific sequences of letters.
 - c. Understand that words are separated by spaces in print.

Phonics and Word Recognition

3. Know and apply grade-level phonics and word analysis skills in decoding words both in isolation and in text.
 - a. Demonstrate basic knowledge of one-to-one letter-sound correspondence by producing the primary or many of the most frequent sound for each consonant.

Fluency

4. Read emergent-reader texts with purpose and understanding.

Speaking and Listening Standards

Comprehension and Collaboration

1. Participate in collaborative conversations with diverse partners about kindergarten topics and texts with peers and adults in small and larger groups.
 - a. Follow agreed-upon rules for discussions (e.g., listening to others and taking turns speaking about topics and texts under discussion).
 - b. Continue a conversation through multiple exchanges.

Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas

4. Describe familiar people, places, things and events and, with prompting and support, provide additional details.
5. Add drawings or other visual displays to descriptions as desired to provide additional detail.
6. Speak audibly and express thoughts, feelings, and ideas clearly.

Language Conventions

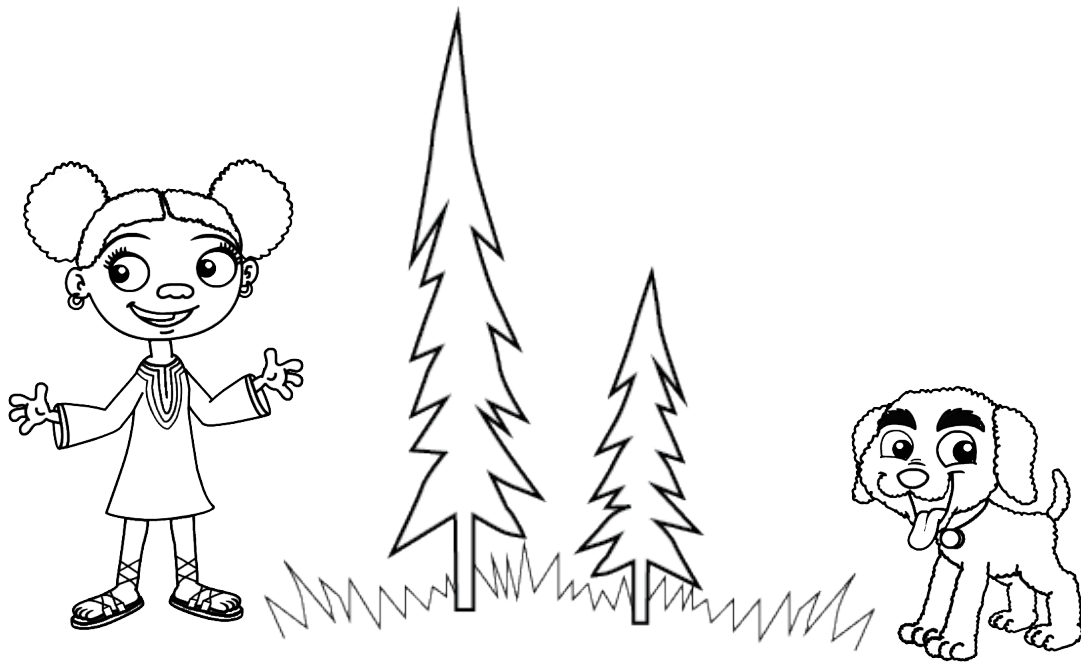
Conventions of Standard English

1. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standards English grammar and usage when writing or speaking.
 - a. Print many upper- and lowercase letters.
 - b. Use frequently occurring nouns and verbs,
 - f. Produce and expand complete sentences in shared language activities.

2. Demonstrate command of the conventions of standards English capitalization, punctuation, and spelling when writing.
 - c. Write a letter or letters for most consonant and short-vowel sounds (phonemes).
 - d. Spell simple words phonetically, drawing on knowledge of sound-letter relationships.

Additional Skills and Concepts

- Recognize letters in the environment
- Practice fine motor skills
- Recognize differences between letters
- Use critical thinking when guessing or creating a riddle



RESOURCES

Alphabet books serve as a resource for children to begin to learn to read, to think and to learn to observe. Not only can young children learn to name the letters of the alphabet but to gain an appreciation for the language through rhymes and poetry.

Books to read aloud:

- *Abecedario de los animales* – Alma Flor Ada
- *Abecedarios: Mexican Folk Art ABCs in English and Spanish*
- *Albertina anda arriba: El abecedario/Albertina Goes Up: An Alphabet Book* – Nancy Maria Grande Tabor
- *Alligator Arrived with Apples: A Potluck Alphabet Feast* – Crescent Dragonwagon
- *Allison's Zinnia* – Anita Lobel
- *Calavera Abecedario: A Day of the Dead Alphabet Book* – Jeanette Winter
- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom*– Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- *Gathering the Sun: An Alphabet in Spanish and English* – Alma Flor Ada
- *Grandmother's Alphabet: Grandma Can be Anything from A to Z* – Eve Shaw
- *I Spy: An Alphabet in Art* – Lucy Micklethwait
- *The Graphic Alphabet* – David Pelletier