

Introduction to Alphabet and Numeral Activities

The following pages contain activities that help children remember the letters A to Z and the numerals 1 to 10. Some children seem to learn letter names (and the associated sounds) and numeral names (and the value they represent) rather quickly. Other children need many more experiences. Not every child makes the same connection between the abstract squiggles he or she made in an activity and what we call letters and numbers.

Many children need some kind of “anchor experience” to help them remember this knowledge. Of course, not every child remembers A simply because of apples or B because of balls. Some children remember A because of a friend named Aaron or because of their fascination with astronauts. In this light, we present families with a few anchor experiences for each letter or numeral to use with their children.

There are several ways to use these experiences with your class. You might select the activities for the letters or numerals that you are presenting in class and attach them to your weekly family communication. You could simply attach the activities to the bottom of your family communication before photocopying it. Or you may send the activities home only with those children who are struggling with remembering certain letters or numbers. At a family meeting, you might set up stations so that families can do the activities with their children. A classroom volunteer or tutor could use these activities with small groups of children. There are many possibilities.

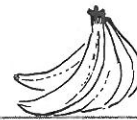
Often, families want to help their children at home but do not know exactly what to do. With your guidance, they’ll feel capable of “doing the right thing” with their child. As well, they usually appreciate specific suggestions of activities to do that will help their child.

Aa

Get a variety of apples and conduct a taste test with your child to determine your family’s top-five favorite apples. Your child can survey each family member by offering a taste of each variety. Then your child can record the results and announce the favorites.

Bb

Together with your child, prepare a Saturday breakfast using all foods that begin with the /b/ sound. You might have bagels or biscuits with butter and bananas.



Dd

Designate a few minutes several days in a row as dance time. Play different types of music and encourage your child to dance to the music.



Aa

Gather a variety of apples and conduct a taste test with your child to determine your family's top-five favorite apples. Your child can survey each family member by offering a taste of each variety. Then your child can record the results and announce the favorites.

Aa

Using a map, find places in the world with names that begin with the short-*a* sound, such as Antarctica, Alabama, Arizona, and Afghanistan.

Aa

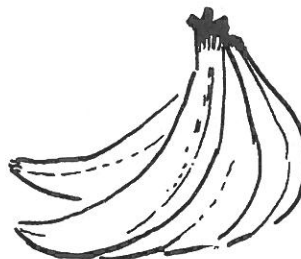
Some animals, such as anaconda and alligator, have names that begin with the short-*a* sound. After researching these, help your child draw an illustration of each one and write a capital and lowercase letter beside the drawing.

Aa

Use aluminum foil to make a sculpture. Show your child how to crumple the foil to create animals whose names begin with the short-*a* sound, such as an ant or an alligator.

Bb

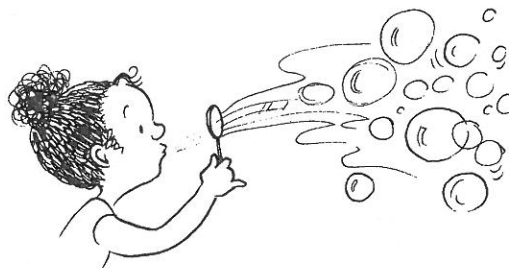
Together with your child, prepare a Saturday breakfast using all foods with names that begin with the /b/ sound. You might have bagels or biscuits with butter or bananas.

**Bb**

Take different-size balls outside and practice bouncing them, repeating the phrase "bouncing the ball" over and over. Each time emphasize the /b/ sound of the two words.

**Bb**

Buy bubbles and share a few minutes blowing bubbles at each other.



Cc

Use foods with names that begin with c to create a vegetable-and-dip platter. Enlist your child's help to prepare cauliflower, carrots, cabbage, corn, cucumber, cantaloupe, and so on. Serve these foods for dinner with cupcakes or cones of ice cream for dessert.



Cc

Use construction paper to cut and glue a collage of colors, use colored corn to make a mosaic, or use clay to create coasters.

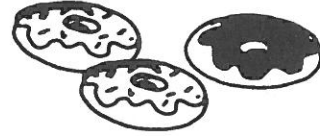


Cc

Stack cans to make a sculpture.

Dd

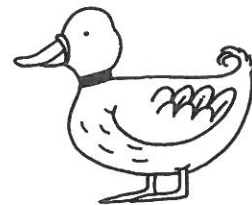
Choose a weekend morning for a special "Doughnuts with Dad" breakfast.

**Dd**

Designate a few minutes several days in a row as dance time. Play different types of music and encourage your child to dance to the music.

**Dd**

Have a scavenger hunt to look for things with names that begin with the /d/ sound, such as a desk, dominoes, a dictionary, dice, a daughter, a duck, Delaware (if you have a map of the United States), a doctor, a dog, a dinosaur, or dishes.



Ee

Eat eggs for dinner! Cook hard-boiled eggs and make deviled eggs, beat eggs together to make scrambled eggs, or chop eggs to make egg salad sandwiches. Dye hard-boiled eggs and hide them for an egg hunt. Or have egg-rolling races with the dyed eggs.

Ee

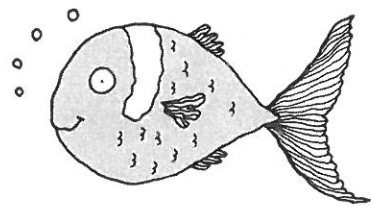
Explore what might be an unfamiliar vegetable—eggplant! Buy an eggplant and let your child help you prepare it. Cook it and eat it with rice.

Ee

Lead your child in some motions with words that begin with the short-e sound. For example, you and your child could pretend to look over the edge of a cliff (or other high place), use an emery board to file fingernails, ride in an elevator, walk like an elephant, or embroider with a needle and thread.

Ff

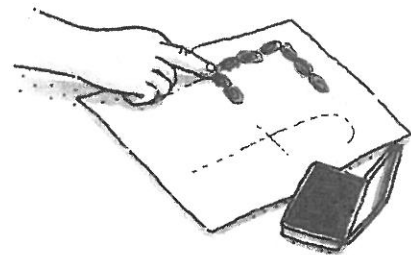
Go to the grocery store together and look at all the fish options. Buy a fish fillet, then bake it for a family meal.

**Ff**

Cut out fish-shaped paper and write a capital *F* and lowercase *f* on each fish. Place a paper clip on each fish. Then tie string to a dowel rod or stick and place a magnet on the end of the string. A game of fishing and repeating the letter name and sound will reinforce remembering *F*.

Ff

With paints, either finger paint or create fingerprints.



Gg

Gather gloves from all family members. Put them in a pile and help your child sort them. Then return them to the correct family member. Or have your child wear his or her gloves as simple household tasks are attempted. See if emptying trash bins, picking up the newspaper, putting away toys, and so on is easier or harder while wearing gloves.

Gg

Score a goal by kicking a soccer ball or throwing a baseball at a target. Yell "Goal!" each time your child scores.

Gg

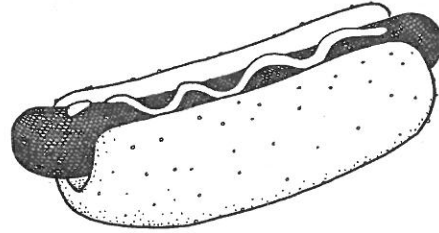
Make garlic bread by spreading bread slices with butter and garlic. Serve with dinner.

Gg

Play Go and Stop in a fashion similar to Red Light, Green Light. Ask your child to move a distance from you. While you turn your back, your child advances toward you. At various intervals, yell "Stop!" as you turn around. If you see your child moving, he or she must return to the distant spot. Say "Go," turn around, and your child advances again. The object is for your child to reach you without getting caught.

Hh

Make a meal of hot dogs and hamburgers for family and friends.

**Hh**

Create hats out of newspaper or some other materials.

**Hh**

Create handprints with paint and small pieces of paper.



I i

Invite friends over for an ice-cream party.
Or ice a cake with icing.

I i

Make icicles out of paper and tape them to the eaves of the house. Pretend that the sidewalk is icy or pretend to ice-skate.

I i

Build an igloo. Use sugar cubes, blocks, or boxes to construct an igloo. Or make ice sculptures using ice cubes on a towel.

I i

Compare the melting rates of ice. Freeze water in a plastic container to make a large block. Compare the melting rate of the large block with those of smaller cubes. Or place the same number of cubes in different locations—a warm spot, a cool spot, in the sun, in the shade. Observe the cubes to see which melts the fastest and which the slowest.

Jj

Memorizing the letter name and sound for *J* offers a good time for exercise. Together, do jumping jacks and chant, "J, J, Jumping Jacks."

**Jj**

Make a breakfast of foods with names that begin with *J*: juice, Jell-O, jam, and jelly.

Jj

Play with jump ropes or have a jumping jacks contest.



Kk

Play kickball or simply kick a ball back and forth. Or go to an open area and fly kites.

**Kk**

Using string and beads, make key chains for family members.

**Kk**

Eat kiwi. If this fruit is unfamiliar to your child, ask him or her to predict what it will look and taste like before cutting into it.

LI

Create a dinner of foods whose names begin with the letter *L*: lemonade, lasagna, and lettuce with lime juice.

LI

Have a limbo contest. Find a broom. Play party music. Take turns bending backward and walking under the broom handle. Lower the broom a little bit each round.

LI

Make leaf prints by collecting different-shape leaves and pressing the leaves into paint and then onto paper. Or place leaves between two sheets of wax paper and gently press them together with a warm iron. Be sure to closely supervise the use of the iron.



Mm

Chant the traditional rhyme "Miss Mary Mack" with your child. Add hand motions if you desire.

Miss Mary Mack, Mack, Mack
All dressed in black, black, black
With silver buttons, buttons, buttons
All down her back, back, back.

She asked her mother, mother, mother
For 50 cents, cents, cents
To see the elephants, elephants, elephants
Jump over the fence, fence, fence.

They jumped so high, high, high
They reached the sky, sky, sky
And didn't come back, back, back
Until the Fourth of July, ly, ly!

Mm

Eat foods with names that begin with the letter *M*. For dinner, have macaroni and meatballs or taste mangos, marshmallows, matzo, melba toast, mushrooms, and so on.

Mm

Make masks using paper plates and art supplies.

Nn

String round cereal or hollow pasta to make necklaces.

Nn

Make nachos (shredded cheese and/or refried beans on tortilla chips).

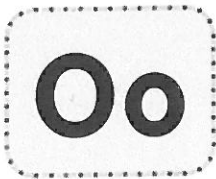
Nn

Go to the library. Check out and read together *Noisy Nora* by Rosemary Wells.

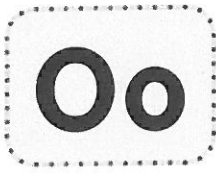




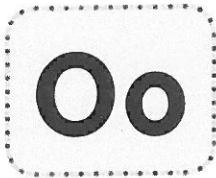
Celebrate "Orange Family Day" by asking all family members to wear orange. Tie an orange scarf on family pets as well.



Eat orange foods, such as orange Jell-O, cantaloupe, cheese, and carrots.



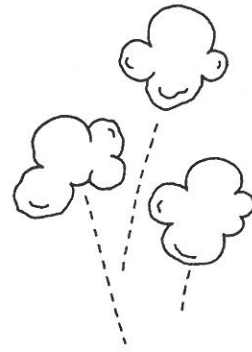
Cut out several sizes of octagons and ovals from construction paper. With your child, construct a collage using the shapes and glue.



Listen to opera music. Some children's stories, such as *The Little Prince*, have been adapted to opera. Ask your child to imagine what is happening when the different instruments play. Ask him or her to move to the beat of the music.

Pp

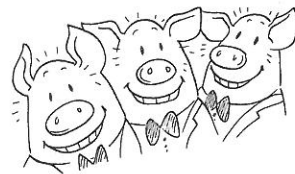
Have a family pajama party and plan activities that emphasize words that begin with the /p/ sound. Make popcorn. Create puppets from paper bags. Play with play dough.

**Pp**

Experiment with foods that you don't normally eat, such as pineapple, pistachio nuts, peanut brittle, papaya, or peaches, or emphasize the beginning sound of some family favorites, such as pizza or popcorn. Repeating the word with emphasis on the beginning sound helps your child connect this letter and sound to a favorite food.

Pp

Check out "The Three Little Pigs" and read it aloud at bedtime. Each time the word *pig* appears in the book, emphasize the /p/ sound. Or count how many times the word is used in the book.



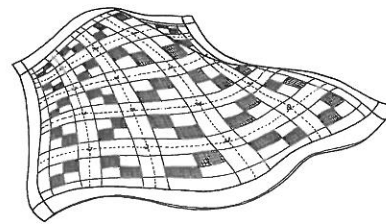
Qq

Help your child make a crown out of construction paper or aluminum foil. Crown the female family members as "Queen for the Day."



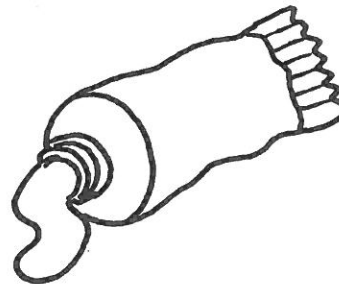
Qq

Cut small squares from various kinds of paper and glue them together to make a quilt.



Qq

Paint a picture using Q-tips and paint.



Rr

Go on a nature walk around the neighborhood with your child. Take along white paper and a few old crayons. Holding the crayon on its side, make rubbings of different things you find outside: leaves, rocks, tree bark, bricks, sidewalks, fences.

Rr

Cook ravioli for dinner.

Rr

Have a scavenger hunt and search for items that are red. Look for red apples, red tomatoes, a red wagon, a red crayon, a red rose, and so on.

Ss

Teach your child the tongue twister "She sells seashells by the seashore." Repeat the sentence several times. Then help your child repeat small segments of it until he or she can say it alone.

Ss

Fix lunch by making sandwiches with sunflower seeds sprinkled on top. Serve with squash soup.

Ss

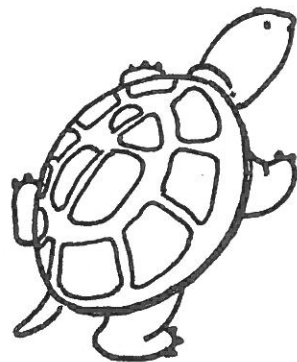
When doing the laundry, enlist your child's help to sort socks. Give him or her all the socks to arrange into matching pairs. Then they can be put away in the sock drawer.

Ss

Sing "Itsy, Bitsy Spider," emphasizing the /s/ sound in *spider*, *spout*, and *sun*. Or play Simon Says, highlighting motions with an /s/ sound, such as sitting down, standing up, or spinning around.

Tt

Have your child sculpt turtles from clay or play dough. As he or she works, encourage talk about turtles, stressing words that begin with the /t/ sound, such as turtle and tail.

**Tt**

Go to the library and check out several alphabet books. Have your child find all the "T" pages and re-create his or her favorite "T" pages.

**Tt**

Make a lunch of foods that begin with the letter *T*. You might consider stuffing tomatoes with tuna and drinking tea.

Uu

Go outside with umbrellas and pretend to walk in the rain. Or dance with them in a pretend show.

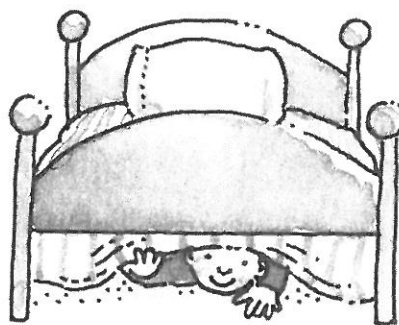


Uu

Play Up or Down: Give your child two objects that have clear "up" and "down" sides, such as plastic glasses. Have him or her place one in each hand. Then, in a manner similar to Simon Says, ask your child to turn the objects up or down. Increase the speed of the game until your child is confused.

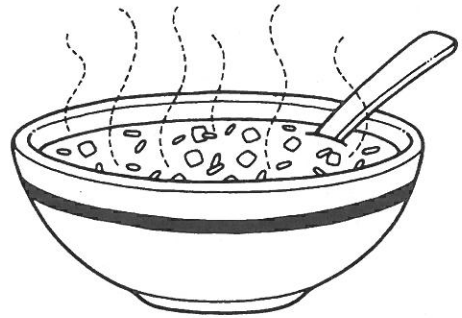
Uu

Play Hide-and-Seek with the rule that the person hiding must hide under an object.



Vv

Make vegetable soup for dinner.



Vv

Make vests to wear around the house. You can use large paper bags from the grocery store for these by cutting up the front of the bag, then cutting holes for the head and arms. Your child can decorate the vests with markers and glue or with a variety of decorative papers.

Vv

Create valentines for family members to let them know that they are loved (even when it is not Valentine's Day).



Ww

Make stained-glass windows out of wax paper. On a sheet of wax paper, place some crayon shavings. Place another sheet of wax paper on top and iron on a very low heat setting to melt the shavings and fuse the layers together. Be sure to protect the surface with newspapers or old towels before ironing. Cut the "stained glass" to size and place in your window.

Ww

On a windy day, make a wind chime. Tie common metal objects (discarded silverware, tin cans, jingle bells, old keys) on strings and group them in a tree so they touch when the wind blows.

Ww

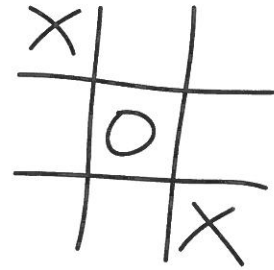
Have waffles for breakfast. Or eat walnuts, watercress, or watermelon.

Ww

Make a W shape with your child by holding your hands overhead and standing close together. Or make a W shape using your fingers. Hold up the first and second fingers of both hands. Then overlap the first fingers to create the W shape. Trace this shape and post it on household objects that begin with the /w/ sound.

Xx

Play Tic-Tac-Toe, letting your child be the one who draws the Xs.



Xx

At snack time, cut small strips of cheese and form them into Xs on crackers.

Xx

Draw pictures of people as they would appear on an X-ray (with only their bones showing).



Yy

Eat yogurt or yams. Pretend that the foods are "yucky," using appropriate facial expressions.

Yy

Celebrate Yellow Day! Dress in yellow, make a flower arrangement of yellow flowers (sunflowers or daisies work well), eat yellow food (such as eggs or cornbread), and color with crayons of various shades of yellow.

Yy

Make yarn paintings. Dip strands of yarn into paint and drag them across the paper.

Yy

Braid several strands of yarn to make friendship bracelets. Make them for family members or share them with friends.

Yy

Surprise your child by asking him or her to yell as loud as possible! Or create a family yell for your favorite sports team.

Zz

Create a pasta-and-vegetable dish using ziti and zucchini.

Zz

Play a game of Zap! Starting in a "freeze" position, call out different actions that begin with the /z/ sound, such as "zip," "zoom," or "zigzag." Between each action, say "zap" to have players freeze in place.

Zz

Find all the zippers in the family's clothes.

