

Driving for Signs

Targeted skill

Young children are expected to name and identify each letter of the alphabet, both the capital and lowercase forms. Further, they are expected to learn that written words are composed of letters that represent sounds. They are also expected to learn the consonant and vowel sounds for these letters.

Materials

- ◆ signs that you observe

What to do

Since many families spend a lot of time outside of their home, riding in either public transportation or private cars, it makes sense to use this time productively. Familiar street signs often intrigue young children, even though they do not know what the words on the signs say.

Call your child's attention to a familiar sign, such as a stop sign. Talk to him or her about the features of that sign. You might discuss the sign's shape, the letters, any letters that are repeated, the sign's colors, and so on. You might contrast the capital and lowercase letters on the sign.

Your child can also learn familiar words from a sign. Street signs display the names of streets; direction signs often incorporate direction words such as *right* or *left*; traffic signs display words such as *slow* and *turn*; speed-limit signs teach numerals.

Extending the activity

- ✦ When you return home, ask your child to write down the letters that he or she saw. Make signs to represent favorites. Your child might make traffic signs to use in his or her playtime.
- ✦ Ask your child to count the number of times you see a particular sign in the course of a trip. While stopped in traffic, notice letters that are repeated in a given sign.

What your child is practicing

This activity focuses your child's attention on letters and words that he or she sees every day. Calling your child's attention to signs helps him or her associate letter names with shapes (and possibly sounds as well).