

# Labeling a Room

## Targeted skill

Young children must learn to connect an initial consonant sound with the letter that represents it.

## Materials

- ◆ index cards
- ◆ felt-tip markers or pencils
- ◆ tape

## What to do

This is a quick and easy way to take your child's interest in language and make it a learning activity. When your child expresses interest in beginning sounds, make labels of common objects in your home. In the beginning, write only the letter that makes the first sound of the object. Label the door as "D," the sofa as "S," and so on. As your child's knowledge grows, begin to label objects with the whole word—label the stove as "stove" and the chair as "chair."

Remember to keep this simple and begin by labeling only a few things at a time. Begin with signs that incorporate only one letter—"D" for door, "S" for sofa, and so on.

## Extending the activity

- ✦ At the simplest level, begin by wearing a label with an "M" for mom or "D" for dad. Remind your child of the letters and the sound that they make. Periodically, ask your child to name the letter as you point to the sign. Remember that young children need many opportunities to practice a skill before they learn it.
- ✦ Once children get used to seeing the same signs day after day, they do not notice them anymore. After your child's interest wanes, replace the signs with new ones.
- ✦ Be sure to include your child in the preparation of the signs. Carefully form the letters, talking through each stroke, and then give the signs to your child to place on the objects.

## What your child is practicing

Young children have learned that speaking specific words gets them what they want. The youngest children learn that saying "wa-wa" gets them a drink. By labeling objects in your house, you are helping your child take the next step of associating a letter's form with a sound. Making the connection that reading is talking written down is critical to helping children understand the basics of reading.