

## **LETTER IDENTIFICATION**

### **WHAT IS LETTER IDENTIFICATION?**

Letter identification is a skill that involves being able to say the names of both upper and lower case letters of the alphabet quickly, without having to think very long about each letter.

### **WHY ARE LETTER IDENTIFICATION SKILLS IMPORTANT?**

Letter identification is helpful in developing reading skills. Sometimes, a letter name will give a child clues as to the sound the letter makes. This can be helpful when the child is trying to figure out a word.

**It is very important when working on letter identification at home that you do not give your child too many unknown letters to work on at a time. A good rule of thumb is to work on no more than 2 unknown letters at a time.**

### **ACTIVITIES TO DEVELOP LETTER IDENTIFICATION SKILLS**

#### **Alphabet Books**

Read lots of alphabet (or ABC) books to your child. Your child's teacher can suggest some fun books, or you can find them at the public library. As you read the book to your child, have your child point to the letters as you read them. Sometimes it's helpful to have your child trace the letter, as well. Your child can also make his own ABC book by using the online template here:

[http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson\\_images/lesson132/student-abc.pdf](http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/lesson_images/lesson132/student-abc.pdf)

#### **Find the Letters in Your Name**

It is a good idea to teach your child to identify the letters in his name first, if he doesn't already know them. Once your child knows the letters in his name, you can play this activity. Fold a paper in half and write "Letters in my name" on one half and "Letters not in my name" on the other half. Attach the paper to a clipboard and have your child walk around the house looking at print materials—magazines, food cartons, books, newspapers--looking for the letters in his name and other "interesting" letters. When he finds a letter, he can determine which half of the paper to write it on. Always tell your child the name of the letter he has written, or have him tell you what it is.

#### **Magnetic Letter Activities**

Purchase a set of inexpensive magnetic letters, and put them on your refrigerator or a metal file cabinet for easy access. There are many activities you can use these for:

- **Find a Letter:** Have your child sit in front of the letters (you can remove some letters, if you wish, so there aren't so many to look at), and say, "**Find**

- the “s” as quickly as you can.”** Keep going with other letters.
- **Letter Sorting:** Again, with your child sitting in front of the letters, have your child sort the letters in the following ways: 1) Upper Case and Lower Case, 2) Letters with Curves, Letters with Straight Lines, and Letters with Both Curves and Straight Lines, 3) Letters in My Name, 4) Any other sort that you wish to try. Remember to have only a couple unknown letters in the set your child is playing with. Reinforce the names of the letters as your child sorts. Say, **“Which letters were in the ‘Letters with Curves’ group?”**
  - **Letter Matching:** If your magnetic letter set has both upper and lower case letters, you can have your child match the “pairs”. Again, remember not to include too many unknown letters.
  - **Memory Game:** Place about three letter magnetic letters on a tray, cover them with a cloth, and take one away. When the letters are uncovered, have your child guess which letter is missing. If your child is very interested in writing, they can write the letter that is missing on a dry erase lap board or paper. To increase the difficulty of this game, place three letters on the tray, cover them, and ask the children to recall all three letters that were on the tray. Remember to use only a couple unknown letters in this game.

### **Letter Basketball**

Write the letters your child knows and a couple letters he doesn't know on sheets of paper, one letter per sheet. Show your child the letter sheets, one at a time. If your child knows the letter on a sheet and says it quickly, he can crumble up the paper and try to throw the paper to make a “basket” in the garbage can. The child gets a point for every basket. Some children will enjoy trying to raise their score from the previous time they played the activity.

### **Online Games and Activities**

If you have a computer, your child may have a lot of fun with the letter identification games at these sites:

- <http://www.readwritethink.org/files/resources/interactives/abcmatch/>
- [http://www.internet4classrooms.com/kplus\\_alpha.htm](http://www.internet4classrooms.com/kplus_alpha.htm)
- <http://ziggityzoom.com/games/letter-blaster>
- <http://www.starfall.com/n/level-k/index/play.htm?f>