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Use Food To Teach Your Child The Alphabet

By Deanna Mascle

Teaching your young child the alphabet should be a high priority. Your child should not wait until preschool or kindergarten to learn their letters. Knowledge of their ABCs is one of the prime indicators of reading success for children.

When you work on the alphabet with your child, make sure the child can recognize all the letters of the alphabet both in order and out of sequence plus both upper and lower case. In addition, as the child grows more comfortable with the letters begin introducing the various sounds that go along with the letters. It easy to then take a step closer to reading by naming words that also begin with that letter or sound.

While many parents succumb to the temptation of buying expensive learning aids these are not necessary and may well provide more distraction than aid for the learning process. Instead simply invest in a set of plastic refrigerator magnets and call it a day. Coloring sheets are available for free on the Internet so why spend a lot of money on expensive programs?

The best, and cheapest, method is simply using the world around you and simple, familiar items available at home. One fun easy method is to use food. You have food in your kitchen and you need to feed your child several times a day so why not combine lessons with snacks and meals?

Your food lessons plans can be as complicated or as simple as you would like.

Initially you may choose to simply serve foods that begin with the "letter of the day", such as B for Banana and A for Apple and M for Marshmallow and so on.

As your child grows more adept at the alphabet then you can have the child tell you what letters are on her plate, such as S for Spaghetti or E for Eggs.

While most parents don't encourage their children to play with their food you can make an exception for certain lessons. Make homemade pretzels or breadsticks in the shape of various letters. Use icing to decorate cookies or cupcakes with letters. Allowing children to experience the alphabet through taste, touch, and manipulation will help cement the knowledge.

The truth is that the best way to teach your child the alphabet is to make it a regular part of your daily life. If your child experiences the alphabet in various ways and through a variety of methods then they will be more confident of their knowledge of their ABCs and will have a much easier time building on that knowledge as they develop other emergent literacy skills. Giving your son an apple and incorporating that apple into a lesson about the letter A will feed both his brain and his body.

Deanna Mascle shares more tips about teaching the alphabet in her blog at <http://HowToTeachTheAlphabet.info>

Learning The Alphabet: Why It Is So Important For Children

By Deanna Mascle

What is the alphabet and why is it important for our children to learn it? The alphabet is simply a collection of letters and sounds. Most of us cannot even remember a time when we did not know our letters so it sounds almost absurd to worry about how to teach it to our children. Yet, the ABCs are the building blocks of language. In order to become literate, our children must be able to recognize each letter, both in order and out of order, as well as the sounds connected with that letter. Once armed with that knowledge, then a child is well on the road to reading and literacy.

Learning the alphabet should begin early in a child's life. While some children do not learn their letters until they start school this is not recommended. In fact, children should be well on their way to alphabet mastery before preschool age and should certainly be at least introduced to the letters before the age of 3.

Start simple. Do not attempt to teach all 26 letters at once. Simply concentrate on a few letters at a time and allow your child to see, hear, and experience that letter in a variety of ways. Remember that children learn by utilizing their senses so while alphabet books can be a helpful learning tool you should utilize a number of approaches to teach the ABCs. Buy or make letters that children can experience in 3-D and let the child construct letters as well using play dough. Alphabet coloring pages and crafts can also help reinforce your child's knowledge of letters.

The most important teaching tip of all is to make it fun. Make it a game and your child will love learning with you and from you.

The alphabet is the building block of literacy and so children must learn to recognize and name the letters, both in and out of order, and the sounds associated with each letter.

Deanna Mascle shares more information about teaching the alphabet plus Alphabet Printables at <http://howtoteachabcs.info> and Alphabet Coloring Pages at <http://howtoteachthealphabet.info>

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