

# Letters and Sounds Activities

## 1. Names - My Name Is

Use the children's names to focus on letter names and letter sounds. Write the rhyme below on colored paper or tag paper with space for the child to draw a self-portrait. As children are creating their portraits, fill in their names and the beginning letter in the appropriate spaces. (Using yarn for the hair gives a nice three dimensional look.)

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Karen*)  
I begin with \_\_\_\_\_. (*K*)

## 2. Names - I Want to Be

Have children draw a self-portrait of what they would like to do when they grow up. Invite the children to use the same beginning letter/sound for the career or activity.

My name is \_\_\_\_\_. (*Bobby*)  
And I want to be a \_\_\_\_\_. (*baker*)

## 3. Names - Toe Touch

Have children take their right foot, cross over their left foot, and touch the floor with their right toe. Then, do the same with the left foot crossing over the right. Alternate these two actions as you say the following.

(*letter name*)  
My name is (*name*)  
and I like \_\_\_\_\_!

For example,

**R**  
My name is *Robbie*  
and I like *rockets!*

## 4. Names - Someone's in the Kitchen

(Sing to the tune of *Someone's in the Kitchen with Dinah.*)

Someone's in the kitchen with \_\_\_\_\_ (child's name).

Someone's in the kitchen I know-oh-oh-oh.

Someone's in the kitchen with \_\_\_\_\_  
strumming on the old banjo.

And she goes (if child's name was Dena)

**De Di Diddly-i-o**

**De Di Diddly-i-o-oh-oh-oh**

**De Di Diddly-i-o**

Strumming on the old banjo.

Challenge the children to sing the chorus with various letters you call out, "Try it with the /ch/ sound."

**Ch Ch Chiddly-i-o**

**Ch Ch Chiddly-i-o-oh-oh-oh**

**Ch Ch Chiddly-i-o**

Strumming on the old banjo.

## 5. Beginning Sounds Picture Sorting

Have the children sort pictures that have the same sound in a pocket chart. Have the children identify the picture that has a different beginning sound. Have the children match pictures to alphabet letter cards in a pocket chart. Have the children sort pictures by the same beginning sound, ending sound, or medial sound. Place three pictures in a row and ask which one does not belong. Ask them to explain why a word could not go in a particular group.

## 6. Beginning Sounds - Old McDonald

(Using the tune to *Old McDonald Had a Farm*)

Have the children copy a letter (uppercase or lowercase) on to sticky notes and stick them to objects around the room that begin with that letter.

What's the sound that starts these words:

*Turtle, time, and teeth?* (Allow time for the children to answer.)

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

*turtle, time, and teeth.*

With a /t/, /t/ here, and a /t/, /t/ there

Here a /t/, there a /t/, everywhere a /t/, /t/.

/t/ is the sound that starts these words:

*Turtle, time, and teeth!*

## 7. Beginning Sounds

**Teacher:**

Listen, listen,

Loud and clear

What's the first sound

That you hear?

*monkey, moon, man, and mop*

(Say a series of four words with the same beginning sound.)

**Class chants:**

Tell us, tell us

What you hear. (teacher points to one child)

**One student answers with the letter sound:**

I hear /m/

Loud and clear.

## 8. Beginning Sounds - Object Sorting

Have the children collect objects and/or pictures of things that begin with the same beginning sound place them in resealable plastic bags in the ABC center. Include a card with the letter written in both upper case and lower case.

*Variation:* Combine the contents of two resealable plastic bags into a box or large grab bag. Be sure to have the children say the name of the item and its beginning sound as they separate the objects that begin with the featured letter.

*Variation:* Have the children sort two or three letters at a time. For example, place the contents of the /p/ bag, /t/ bag, and /k/ bag into one box. Place three pieces of colored paper on the table or floor. Label one colored sheet P p, one T t, and one K k or simply place one of the letter label cards on each sheet. Have the children place the objects they draw from the box on the appropriate piece of colored paper. Be sure to have the children say the name of their object and its beginning sound before placing it in the appropriate letter group.

## 9. Sounds - Three Chairs

Ask three children to sit in chairs at the front of the room. Hold up a letter and say a word with the sound that the letter makes. Have the three children decide whether the focus letter/sound comes at the beginning, middle, or end of the word. The child in that chair takes the letter card. The class can then confirm or disagree with their decision.

**10. Sounds - Noisy Words**

Invite the children to listen to a rich sound word such as *snip, whoosh, rustle, swish*, and so forth. Have the children predict what letters they might see in those words. Then have the children look at the word to see if they were correct.

**11. Sounds - Sound Flippers**

Take a familiar rhyme and switch around the beginning sound of some of the words, such as: Dumpty Humpty wat on a sall.

**12. Letters - Spelling Try Cards**

Have the children use a "try card" before writing words that give them a little trouble. Children can make their first attempts at the word by writing it on a sticky note, index card, or scratch paper. Have them focus on auditory strategies at first. Later shift them to a visual emphasis. "Does that look right?"

**13. Alliteration**

Have the children make up two or three phrases that repeat the same initial sound such as *big blue bears*, or *fat floppy fish*.

**14. Phonics Phones**

Say a word very slowly, without segmenting it, into a megaphone, j-trap, or other sound-magnifying instrument. Have the children listen to and identify the beginning sound.

**15. Letter Pictures**

Have the children illustrate a word and write its beginning sound.

**16. Tic-Tac-Toe**

Make a Tic-Tac-Toe grid and place a letter in the center square. Divide the class into two teams. Ask one team to tell you a word that begins with the designated letter. If they guess correctly, write the word on a self-stick note and ask them where they want to place the word in the remaining squares. Follow the same process for the other team. Continue alternating until one team wins.

**17. Family Feud**

Divide the class into teams. Select a letter to begin the game. Ask one team to start. Each member of the team must say a word that starts with that letter. If one member of a team says an incorrect word, then the game shifts to the other team. The other team proceeds until it makes an error. The team with the most words scores the point.

Note: This game can be played with multiple teams or table groups.

**18. Mystery Letter Guest**

Have table groups choose a mystery letter (delivered in a sealed envelope) and keep it a secret from the rest of the class. Have the group collect six items that begin with that letter and keep them hidden in a box or under a cloth until they are ready to have the class guess. Lift up the cloth to reveal the items for 15-30 seconds. From memory, the table that is guessing must name all the items and then name the mystery letter. They get one point for each item they remember, even if they call it a different name, and one point for correctly guessing the letter.

Note: Incorrectly guessed letters can be put in new mystery letter envelopes.

**19. Mystery Word Scrambles**

Place the letters for a word in an envelope or bag. Write the word on a piece of paper, fold it up, and put it in with the letters. Invite the children to take the letters out and try to make the mystery word or unfold the paper and match the letters to the word.

**20. Sound Hunters**

Have the children find words that have the focus sound in them in books, poems, and places around the room.

**21. Picture Cut Ups**

Have the children illustrate a word and then cut it up according to the number of sounds they hear in it. Invite the children to write the letters in each of the sections as an added complexity.

**22. Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Word**

Say the following rhyme and have the children answer the question posed. Listen, listen to my word.

Tell me all the sounds you heard.

(Say the word slowly without breaking it apart.) **Cat**  
(Children respond.) /c/-/a/-/t/

**23. Front - Middle - End**

Using a picture of a train, airplane, or car, designate the front, middle, and end. Ask children where they hear the sound of a particular letter. In front? In the middle? At the end?

**24. Letters - ABC Tune Changes**

The traditional tune we use when we sing the ABC song is also the one we use to sing *Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star*. Vary the ABC song by using other familiar tunes and stretch the children's ability to name their letters in new contexts. Try using the tune of *99 Bottles* and write the letters in a new pattern to go with the tune, such as the following:

A B C  
D E F G  
H I J K L M  
N O P Q  
R S T U  
V W X Y Z

Try using the tune to *The Muffin Man* as follows:

A B C D E F G  
H I J K  
L M N O  
P Q R S T U V  
W X Y Z

**25. Letter Stickers**

Have the children copy a letter (uppercase or lowercase) onto self-stick notes and stick them to objects around the room that begin with that letter.

**26. Letter Hunters**

Have the children go on a letter hunt around the room. How many places can they find the letter? Have them place a brightly colored self-stick note

next to each "find."

Note: Magnifying glasses are a nice touch for this activity.

## 27. Letter Makers

Provide a variety of materials for children to make letters, such as sand, clay, dough, cereal, yarn, chalk, paint, collage, craft sticks, popcorn, or wet linguine.

## Onset and Rime Activities

### 1. Picture Rimes

Have the children sort picture cards that are from the same word family from those that are not. Ask the children to verbalize why a picture card does not belong.

### 2. Draw a Rhyme

Have the children illustrate two words that sound alike, such as moon and balloon.

### 3. Word Family Flip Books

Create flip books from the words that children collect in the same word family.

### 4. Word Wallets

Have the children sort words into two or three rime family folders.

### 5. Rhyme/Rime Songs

Sing songs that emphasize rhyme couplets, such as "The Ants Go Marching", "Down By the Bay", and "A Hunting We Will Go".

### 6. Mother Goose Rhymes

Innovate or change traditional rhymes to make new rime couplets. For instance:

Humpty Dumpty sat on a pin.  
Humpty Dumpty broke his chin.  
Humpty Dumpty sat on a door.  
Humpty Dumpty fell on the floor.  
Jack and Jill went up the mountain.  
To get some water from the fountain.

### 7. Circle Rhyme/Rimes

Choose a word from a word family to begin this circle game. Start the game by saying the chant with the word in it, leaving off the final rhyme. The first child repeats the chant and adds his or her own rhyming word at the end. The next child in the circle says the chant using the first child's rhyming word and then adds his or her own new rhyming word at the end.

For example, if the word was *car*, the first child would say:

Car, car, the word is car.  
And car rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_! (star)

The next child in the circle would say:  
Star, star, the word is star.  
And star rhymes with \_\_\_\_\_!

Continue around the circle until the children cannot think of another word in the family. If time and wiggles permit, continue with a new word family.

8. **Snack Baggies**

Place letters in a resealable plastic bag along with the word family on a card. Have the children make as many words as possible using the letters in the baggie. Make a game of this activity by pairing up children. One point is earned for each word identified by the child.

9. **Lap Writers**

Have the children write as many words as possible for a word family. One point is earned for every word. Vary by using magnetic letters.

10. **Oral Cloze Couplets**

Take lines from familiar stories and create couplets. When you say the second line, leave off the final rhyming word. Have the children echo what you said and add the missing word. For instance:

Look out for the bee!  
It's in the \_\_\_\_\_!

I walked to New York  
With a knife and a \_\_\_\_\_.

11. **One-Two Punch**

As you say the onset, punch your right arm straight out in front of you. Then, leaving the right arm where it is, say the rime as you punch your left arm out in front. Then, say the whole word as you push both arms together. The children can follow along until they get the hang of it. Members of the class can take turns adding words from the same word families (*p-at, b-at, r-at.*)

12. **Daily News Family Builders**

Find words in the daily news that are from familiar word families and ask the children to come up with more words in the family. List those words on a chart or chalkboard.

13. **Daily News Family Spellers**

Ask the children to spell words that are from familiar word families when they come up in the sentences they dictate to you.