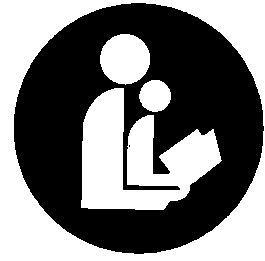


Picture It,
Dads!



Home Activities For
*Alphabet Under
Construction*



Home Activities

Alphabet Under Construction

Activity #1 Alphabet Tale: Alpha-Gator Story

It is much easier for young children to learn the names of alphabet letters when they are introduced through story and rhyme. This is one of the reasons why the alphabet song is so widely known. This alphabet story is a lot of fun to act out as it is told:

Once there was an Alpha-Gator who absolutely adored the alphabet. He ate the letters and had sweet Alphabet dreams all night long. But then one week something went wrong.

On Monday, he ate the letters **ABCDEF**. Then he closed his eyes to get some sleep.

But the pointy part of the **A** kept poking him in his tummy and he couldn't sleep a wink all night long!

On Tuesday, he ate the letters **GHIJK**. Then he closed his eyes to get some sleep. But **H** and **I** made a word and said it over and over- **HI, HI, HI!** and he couldn't sleep a wink all night long!

On Wednesday, he ate the letters **LMNOP**. Then he closed his eyes to get some sleep. But the **O** kept rolling back and forth in his tummy- and he couldn't sleep a wink all night long!

On Thursday, he ate the letters **QRSTUV**. Then he closed his eyes to get some sleep. But the **S** kept saying **SSSSS** and playing snake in his tummy and he couldn't sleep a wink all night long!

On Friday, he ate the letters **WXYZ**. Then he closed his eyes to get some sleep. And he dreamed sweet **Z's** all night long! See you later Alpha-Gator!

Tips and Suggestions

You can make-up lots of different ways to play with the alphabet during this story. Here are just a few:



1. A paper bag puppet alpha-gator works well to gobble up all those letters. Or you or your child can be the alpha-gator while the other person tells the story and gives the alpha-gator the letters to 'eat'.
2. A plastic grocery bag can be attached to the waist of the person playing the alpha-gator using clothes pins or safety pins. As the story is told the letters can be put inside the bag.
3. Use magnetic alphabet letters and help your child put them up on the refrigerator or magnetic board as you tell the story. Encourage your child to say the letters as they put them up. You may have to help say them for a while until your child learns them.

Use *Alphabet Sounds* below to help your child learn the sounds of letters in a fun, action-filled way. Here are a few to get you started so you can make up the rest on your own.

Alphabet Sounds

Angry ant, angry ant,

(Angry face and stick out tongue while saying the sound "a-a-a")

Bouncing ball, bouncing ball,

(Pretend to bounce ball while saying the sound "b-b-b")

Coughing caterpillar, coughing caterpillar,

(Cover mouth like a cough while saying the sound "c-c-c")

Drumming drum, drumming drum,

(Pretend to be holding drum sticks and playing a drum while saying the sound "d-d-d")

Elephant echo, elephant echo,

(Cup ear like you're listening carefully while saying the sound "e-e-e")

Firefighter fighting fires, Firefighter fighting fires

(Pretend to hold a hose and spray water while saying the sound "f-f-f")

Both the learning of letter names and their sounds are important early reading skills for your child to learn. When you make learning fun, you also make it easier. Remember, some children will find this more difficult than others. Repeated practice, frequent praise, time and a large dose of fun are important for success.



Activity #2 Recipe: Play Dough



Play dough is so much fun and relatively inexpensive if you make it yourself. Here are two easy recipes:

Recipe Number One : Microwave Play Dough

This recipe is made in the microwave, which means you can make it quickly.

Ingredients:

2 cups flour
1 cup salt
4 tbs oil
2 cups water
4 tsp cream of tartar
Food coloring

How To: Mix all ingredients in large deep microwaveable container.

Microwave on high for 3 to 5 minutes, stirring every minute. Cook until mixture gets so thick it can't be stirred. Let mixture cool. Divide and knead in food color. Store in an airtight container or Ziplock bag.

Recipe Number Two: Stovetop Playdough Recipe

Ingredients:

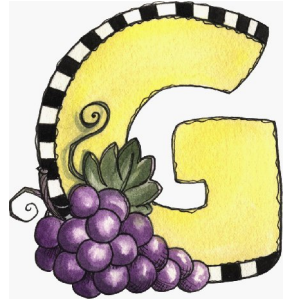
1 cup flour
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup salt
1 cup water
3 tbs cooking oil
2 tsp cream of tartar
Food coloring



How To: Mix all ingredients together. Add a few drops of food coloring. Keep mixing ingredients until all lumps have been blended. Put the mix in a saucepan and cook it very slowly over medium heat.

Activity #3: The Alphabet Letter Lane Action Game

This game is simple to play, and can be adapted any way you like. Use the **Letter Lane** game board provided, make one of your own, or use an old game board you might already have.



How To Play

Shuffle the **Letter Lane** playing cards and place them face down beside the game board. Each player turns over a card on their turn and moves to the colour indicated on the card (i.e. "Move to the next red letter."). All players move in the same direction around the board, beginning at letter A. When a colour is turned up on the card, the player moves to the next letter that has that color. For example, if the card turned up says purple, the player moves his or her game piece to the next purple letter and then the player does some action beginning with that letter. For instance, for D the action might be dancing, drawing, digging, etc. (be creative!). Some cards allow the player to move to the colour of the player's choice (Don't be surprised if your child wants to move backwards to their favourite colour!)

Play continues until you or your child gets to Z, or until all players have made it all the way around the board.

Have fun, and use your imagination!

Tips and Suggestions

If your child is just learning the Alphabet, be sure to name the letter each player lands on.

You may need to help your child at first by giving him/her an action to do that starts with the letter he/she landed on. Eventually, as you play the game more, your child will catch on and use actions they have done before or new ones they have thought of. Some letters will be tricky (Q, X, Z) so you will have to be creative (Quick Queen, X-ray taker, Zebra walker!). Be sure to let your child know that some letters are hard to think of actions for so you might have to add on words like the examples above.

If you have four or more players you can play as teams. The other team then tries to guess the action.

Activity #4: Make Your Own Caption Books With Your Child

You can make caption books with your child by folding two or three pieces of paper in half and fastening them together with yarn, paper fasteners or staples. Make the cover from Bristol board or card stock (available at most drug or stationary stores) and follow the directions below.



Alphabet Books

Use the first letter of your child's name or the first letter of any family member and largely print it on the front cover. Help your child draw or find a picture from a magazine of something that begins with that letter for the front cover. For each of the pages in the book, find one thing with your child that begins with that letter. Glue the picture on the page and print the word for the object in the same place on the page.

Colour Books

Have your child pick a favourite colour. For each page, draw or cut out pictures of things that are that colour. Print a caption for each picture, using the name of the object and the colour each time: a red ball, a red bike, etc.

Me Books

Help your child make personalized caption books about what he/she likes to hear, see or do. Make "I like..." books or books with the pattern "I can..." " I see..." "I have..." Each page repeats the pattern and ends with the name for the object in the picture (For example: I like dogs. I like cats. You can stay with a category such as pets or foods or just have a collection of assorted things your child says he/she likes.)

Tips and Suggestions

You can find inexpensive alphabet letters to trace or glue on the cover or look through magazines for large letters. Make your letters by cutting them out of coloured paper, pages from magazines, or fabric. This will give your alphabet book an interesting look. Let your child help pick out what he/she wants the cover letter to be made out of. You can take photos of your child holding objects that begin with the chosen letter. For example, your child holding a book, your child holding a bear, etc. for the letter B. Glue one photo on each page and print _____(your child's name) is holding a _____(name of the object in the picture).

Catalogues and weekly flyers are also great sources of pictures for your books.

Easing Into Reading: Captions and Labels

Picture books with captions and labels are one way to help your child ease into reading. The text may be a short sentence, a phrase, or a word on each page. The words usually go with the pictures, are usually found in the same place on the page, and often follow a pattern. Once children have learned how the book works, they can read it by themselves. In the beginning they may make up words that are close to the actual text.

Many alphabet books have captions or labels. Each page shows a picture of something that begins with the letter that is shown on that page. Many books follow the pattern "A is for _____." Your child will eventually learn to identify the letter and name the picture.

Counting books often are caption books. They work much like alphabet books except they follow a counting sequence.

Some books have a question and answer pattern such as the books *Where's Spot?*. In this book the question repeated helps the child guess where Spot might be hiding: for example: Is he under the bed? The question is repeated on each page with the picture clue to help him/her read where Spot might be hiding next. There are many versions of this type of pattern.

Favourite fairy tales are often told through a series of pictures with a short phrase or sentence that labels the picture. For instance, *The Three Bears* might show a cottage in the woods and have the label "Bears' cottage." Or show a little girl and have the label "Goldilocks".

Books with labels and captions help young children ease into reading and are short, fun to read, and easy for parents and children to make together.

More Alphabet Books

Chicka Chicka Boom Boom By Bill Martin Jr.

Dr. Seuss's Abc: An Amazing Alphabet Book! By Dr. Seuss

Eric Carle's Abc By Eric Carle

Z is for Zamboni: A Hockey Alphabet By Melanie Rose

Toot and Puddle: Puddle's ABC's by Holly Hobbie

More Books by Denise Fleming (Author of *Alphabet Under Construction*)

Beetle Bop

In the Tall, Tall Grass

Count!

Lunch!

In the Small, Small Pond

Pumpkin Eye

