

ABC's for \$1, \$2, \$3



Magnetic Letters

1. Match magnetic letters to:

- ABC Board Books (Half-Price Books)
- ABC placemats (WalMart \$.99)
- Make pairs of capital and lower case Aa, Bb, Cc

2. Sort magnetic letters by: Color

- Letters with sticks (Ex: l,t,x)
- Letters with curves (Ex: c,s,o)
- Letters with sticks AND curves (Ex: b, m,a)
- Tall letters (Ex: b,h,f)
- Short letters (Ex: a,c,n,o)
- Letters that hang down or monkey tail letters (Ex: j,p,g)

3. Use magnetic letters to:

- Build familiar words (Star Word list)
- Show beginning or ending sound of a word that is said orally
- Play a guessing game: Have the child put his hands behind his back. Place a magnetic letter into his hands. *Without looking at the letter*, have the child identify it. If he needs hints, say: "This letter is at the beginning of the word MOM, MOON, and MAN." Or other hints.
- Play "grab bag". Put the magnetic letters into a sack. Have the child pull out one letter and give a word that starts or ends with that letter. He can then write the capital or lower case of the letter on your back.
- Trace around.
- Bury in a dishpan half full of sand or rice. Using a spoon or plastic beach shovel, have him name the letters as he discovers them or have him dig for a specific letter.

***Magnetic letters** are best used on **burner covers** (Dollar Tree) or **cookie sheets**. These keep the letters organized and ready to use. The cookie sheets can also be taken in the car!

"Eye" Spy

Give your child a pair of silly glasses (sunglasses, frames without the lens, etc.) Have him play "eye" spy by looking around the house for letters or words that you tell him to find.

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Burner Covers/Cookie Sheets

Use these items to give your child the opportunity to write letters or words with:

- Shaving cream
- Paint
- Sand
- Rice
- Sugar
- Flour
- Corn meal
- Salt
- Pudding
- Play dough
- Pipe cleaners

Because of the curved edge, the burner covers or cookie sheets keep the above materials from scattering everywhere!

Making Books

1. **Baggie Book** - Cut construction paper to fit into the baggie. Have your child draw or cut out pictures on the construction paper. Attach 4-6 baggies together to create a book.
2. **Lunch Sack Book** - Take 4-6 lunch sacks and fold over the bottom of each sack. Lift the bottom and glue or draw a picture so it is hidden under the bottom flap. Write the story on the left side of the sack. Place the sacks on top of each other and attach with a stapler, brads, etc.
3. **Tag -Along Book** - Fold several sheets of paper together and staple to make a book. Write a story with one or two sentences on each page. Use stickers, magazine pictures, or drawings to illustrate the story. (Remind your child that every story has a beginning, middle and end!) Punch two holes near the staples and attach a pipe cleaner for the handle. Now this book can "tag along" with your child!
4. **Envelope Book** - Staple several envelopes together. Write on the front of the envelope and add pictures to illustrate it in the envelope.
Or write the same sentence that is on the front on the envelope on a strip of paper. Cut the strip apart word by word. Have your child put the sentence back together independently. (If he has trouble, he can match the words to the front of the envelope!) Store the cut-apart sentence in the envelope.

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* Magic Pudding Bags

Make the pudding according to directions on the box. ** Place just enough pudding in a quart size zipper baggie so that when the bag is lying flat, you cannot see the counter or table through it. **Do not overfill the baggie!** Zip the bag closed and tape the zipper very well with duct tape or packing tape.

Use your finger to draw letters on the bag. The pudding will squish out of the way and you will see the table through the bag in the shape of the letter you drew.

Squish the bag around a bit to magically erase the letter and draw again. When you have finished drawing, open the bag and eat the pudding!

**Hair gel mixed with food coloring works well too and lasts longer, but you can't eat it when you're done! ☺

Shower Curtain Liner (cut in half) or

Colored plastic tablecloth (in party section of Dollar Tree)

1. **Twister**-Print both upper and lower-case letters randomly all over the curtain. (Make sure you keep the up/down orientation of the mat constant!) Cut 52 index cards in half. Write upper-case letters on 26 of them and lower-case letters on the rest. Shuffle and put them into two piles. One pile is the "hands" pile and one pile is the "feet" pile. Draw from each pile and the child puts their hand or foot on the letter drawn from the pile.
2. **Bean Bag Toss**- Using the table cloth/shower curtain liner you made in the above activity, throw a bean bag onto a letter and name it or make the sound that the letter makes, or give a word that begins or ends with the letter. To make a bean bag, fill a small sock with rice or dried beans and tie a knot in the ankle part.
3. **Driving the Alphabet**- Using a permanent marker, draw streets on the shower liner or a plastic tablecloth. Have your child draw houses, parks, trees, etc. by the streets. Label each of these items with upper- and lower-case letters, star words, etc. Use a toy car to drive the streets of the neighborhood, saying each letter or word as the car passes it. A variation could be you name a letter or word and your child drives to that location.

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Index Cards

1. **Alphabet Walk**- Print a letter of the alphabet on each index card (upper-and lower-case letters). Scatter the cards on the floor fairly close together.

Now do an Alphabet Walk!

Walk on....

- the letters in order from A to Z.
 - the lower-case then the upper-case pairs.
 - the letters a partner tells you to walk on.
 - the letters a partner makes a sound for.
1. the letters needed to spell your name.
 2. the letters needed to spell the names of family members.
 3. the letters needed to spell words you know.
2. **Alphabet/Sound Matching** - On index cards write the letters of the alphabet. Turn the cards upside down like you would if playing memory. Next to the cards, put an item that begins with each letter such as an apple, ball, candy, etc. Draw a card and then choose the item that belongs with the corresponding letter. This activity is meant for children who have a solid grasp of the sound of each letter.
 3. **Textured Letters** - Print letters on the index cards (about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch wide). Spread glue on the letters and sprinkle with bird grit (sold in pet stores or WalMart). Let the cards dry. Encourage children to trace the symbols with their fingers. Textured letters can also be made with salt, sugar, colored sand (WalMart in the craft section), sandpaper, fake fur, cotton balls, etc.
 4. **Rhyming Matches** - Print sets of rhyming words on the cards, making sure to create pairs of cards. Set the cards out face down, memory style. Play rhyming memory.
 5. **Picture Cards** - Make a set of picture cards (pictures only-NO words) using index cards and drawings or magazine pictures. Then show a picture card set such as the following:



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Mix the cards and have your child pick two cards whose picture names begin with the same sound. When two cards are selected, say the name of each picture aloud and ask your child to tell you what sound each begins with.

These same cards can also be used for:

- Rhyming
- Ending consonant sounds
- Middle vowel sounds
- Sound boxes (see activity below)

***Index cards** can be stored in **coupon organizers** for easy access and portability.

Sound Boxes

- Draw 3 connected boxes on a sheet of paper.

1.	2.	3.
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- Give your child 3 counters (such as button, pennies, etc.) Explain that you're going to say a list of words that all contain "s". Some words contain "s" at the beginning, some in the middle, and some at the end. Tell your child that if they hear "s" at the beginning of the word, they should place the counter in the first box. If they hear it in the middle, they should place the counter in the center box, etc. (See Sound Box list.)
- Use the connected boxes to "push sounds", Say a 3-letter word very slowly. Have your child push a counter into the box for each sound he hears. Go back and put a magnetic letter in the box instead of the counter.

Ex: You say the word "h-a-t"

(/h/) 1 ↑	(/a/) 2 ↑	(/t/) 3 ↑
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- Now go back and put the magnetic letters in the box.

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Sound Box Activity Words

Sound Box Activity 1

/b/ bed, bat, rubber, bump, tub, web, robe, zebra, cabbage

/c/ music, camp, backbone, comb, coat, trick, baking

/d/ dog, duck, pad, pudding, middle, door, toad, read, puddle, dig

/f/ golf, first, dwarf, ruffle, fire, draft, left, fish, self

/g/ bug, grass, wiggle, song, twig, guess, sugar, dragon, goose

/j/ banjo, jingle, engine, angel, joke, edge, large, jump

/k/ kitchen, smoke, hook, keep, twinkle, package

/l/ bottle, last, wheel, felt, solve, lunch, build

/m/ man, moon, ham, summer, room, hammer, made, dream, lemon

/n/ send, nest, bonus, drink, never, bunny, penny, hen, thin, wagon

/p/ pack, mop, happy, pocket, hope, open, pudding, trap, pencil, keep

/r/ feather, string, scrape, right, red, cheer, orange

/s/ send, missing, sock, bus, less, passing, messy, safe

/t/ bet, batter, truck, lettuce, sent, count, turkey

Sound Box Activity 2

Short a

cat, sat, ran, van, tan, mad, dad, map, tag, rat, bag, sack, tap

Short o

rob, got, shot, mop, fox, top, not, dot, box, doll,

Short e

sell, web, met, yes, beg, well, hen, when, shell, jet, men

Short u

Cut, luck, cub, dug, run, duck, shut, jug, rub, fun,

Short i

Pig, hit, lick, six, fish, bill, bit, pick, wig

Websites:

www.robertmunsch.com

www.janbrett.com

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/products/praidepar.pdf> (English version)

<http://www.tea.s.tx.us/reading/products/ideasprac.pdf> (Spanish version)

<http://www.tea.state.tx.us/reading/interest/interest.html>

<http://k-12.pisd.edu/currinst/element/LangArts/Readinglists.pdf>