Find a Word

**Print Knowledge**

**MAKING PROGRESS: Differentiating Print from Pictures**

**What You Need:**
- pictures of familiar items cut from magazines and advertisements (Some pictures should include print, and some should be simply a picture without any print).
- scissors
- glue
- index cards

**What You Do:**
1. In advance or together with your child, glue each picture onto an index card.
2. Give your child two cards, one that has a word or words on it and one that has just a picture.
3. Say, “Letters can go together to make words. Look for letters and words on your cards. Show me the card that has a word on it.”
4. Help your child choose a picture with a word on it. You can challenge your child to tell you what word he or she sees in the picture.
5. Repeat with a few cards. Reinforce the purpose of the print in each picture. For example, say, “This cereal box has a word on it that tells us the cereal’s name.”

**Why?**
Your child will learn to tell the difference between print and pictures and learn one of the purposes of print.


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**Fishing for Letters**

**Print Knowledge**

**MAKING PROGRESS: Naming Letters**

**What You Need:**
- construction paper
- magnet
- scissors
- large paper clips

**What You Do:**
1. Cut out 26 fish shapes from the construction paper.
2. Have your child decorate one side of each fish.
3. On the other side of each fish, write a letter of the alphabet.
4. Slide a paper clip onto each fish’s tail.
5. To make the “fishing rod,” tie the string to the end of the dowel or stick. Tie the magnet to the other end of the string.
6. Scatter the fish on the floor with the letter side down.
7. Have your child try to “catch” a fish with the fishing rod and say the name of the letter on that fish.
8. For a more advanced version of the game, your child can also say the letter’s sound or a word that starts with that sound.

**Why?**
Your child learns about letter shapes, names and sounds.

Word Puzzles

Print Knowledge
MAKING PROGRESS: Environmental Print

What You Need:
• several empty cartons of foods familiar to your child (e.g., cereals, milk, pasta)
• plastic sandwich bags

What You Do:
1. Cut the carton front into 4-5 puzzle-shaped pieces.
2. Place each puzzle into a bag. If possible, have an intact, identical carton front for your child to see as a model.
3. Put the puzzle together with your child. Ask him to point out the food words on the puzzle and say them out loud.

Why?
Your child learns about print in our everyday world and learns to differentiate print from pictures.


Name Memory

Print Knowledge
MAKING PROGRESS: Naming Letters

What You Need:
• same-colored index cards
• markers

What You Do:
1. Make the game cards: Using only the letters in the child's name, write each letter on two cards so that you have several pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and spread them out face down.
3. Ask the child to turn over any two cards. If the cards match, help the child name the letter. The child then keeps the cards. If the cards do not match, the child turns the cards back over and tries again.
4. Play continues until all matches have been made.
5. Help your child put the letters in order to spell his or her name.

Why?
Your child learns about letter shapes, names and sounds.

**Build Your Name**

**Emergent Writing**

**MAKING PROGRESS: Printing Name**

**What You Need:**
- uppercase and lowercase plastic letters
- bag or cloth sack
- paper
- pencil or crayons

**What You Do:**
1. Write your child's name at the top of the paper in large letters, using an uppercase letter for the first letter in your child's name, followed by lowercase letters.
2. Place the plastic letters that are in your child's name into the bag. Also include one or two letters that are not part of your child's name.
3. Tell your child to pick a letter out of the bag.
4. Ask your child, "What is the name of the letter that you picked? Look at your name. Is this letter in your name?"
5. Ask your child to place the plastic letter under the written letter, and continue until your child has picked all of the letters in his or her name.
6. When your child's name is complete, ask your child to print it out on the paper.

**Why?**
Your child will become familiar with the letters in his or her name.

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**Clay Letters**

**Emergent Writing**

**MAKING PROGRESS: Letters**

**What You Need:**
- modeling clay or play-dough
- paper and pencil

**What You Do:**
1. Print a few letters of the alphabet on the paper, making them at least 6 inches tall.
2. Roll lumps of clay or dough into long, thin strips.
3. Help your child form the strips into letters. At first, your child can make the letter directly on the written model. He or she can progress to forming the strips below the written letter, using it as a guide.

**Why?**
Your child will become familiar with the shape of the letters and practice forming them independently.
Copy a Card

**Emergent Writing**

**MAKING PROGRESS:** Copying

**What You Need:**
- paper
- crayons
- 12 index cards, each with a different figure on one side (simple shape, squiggly line, letter)

**What You Do:**
1. Sit down with your child at a table or on the floor. Give your child a piece of paper and a crayon. Help your child write his or her name on the paper.
2. Place the index cards face down in a pile.
3. Your child should pick a card from the pile. He or she can show the card to you and then draw that figure on the paper. You can do this along with your child on your own paper.
4. After all of the cards have been picked, you and your child can color and decorate the picture.

**Why?**
Your child practices the fine motor skills that will help him or her learn to form letters.


Sequence Story

**Emergent Writing**

**MAKING PROGRESS:** Drawing

**What You Need:**
- crayons
- black marker
- stapler
- drawing paper

**What You Do:**
1. Tell your child about something you’ve done recently, like shopping or making dinner. On three sheets of paper, draw three simple pictures showing the beginning, middle and end of the experience. Use the pictures to tell the story again.
2. Help your child think of a recent experience. Talk together about the beginning, the middle and the end.
3. Help your child draw three pictures, describing the beginning, middle and end of the experience. Number the pictures in the correct order.
4. Ask your child to tell you about his or her pictures in sequence. Write the description for each picture on that picture.
5. Help your child put the pictures in order. Staple the pages together to make a “book” that your child can use to retell the experience.

**Why?**
Your child will learn to use words and pictures to communicate an experience and understand the importance of sequence in a story.

**Trace Your Name**

**Emergent Writing**

**Making Progress:** Printing Name

What You Need:
- marker
- chalk
- construction paper or sandpaper, at least 8 1/2”x11” in size

What You Do:
1. With the marker, write your child’s name in large letters on the paper. Use an uppercase letter for the first letter of the name, and lowercase for the rest of the letters.
2. First, ask your child to use a finger to trace each letter of his or her name on the paper. Help your child say the name of each letter out loud as it is traced.
3. Give chalk to your child, and have him or her trace the letters with the chalk, saying the name of each letter out loud as it is traced. If necessary, begin by holding and guiding your child’s hand as he or she holds the chalk.
4. Encourage your child to trace the letters in order, but be accepting of all attempts.

Why?
Your child practices writing and saying the names of the letters in his or her name.

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**Be a Word**

**Linguistic Awareness**

**Making Progress:** Segmenting Sentences

What You Need:
- the first line of a nursery rhyme, poem or song that your child knows very well
- a ball or beanbag

What You Do:
1. Sit or stand facing your child.
2. Take turns, each saying a word of the line of the rhyme or poem. As you or your child say each word, pass the ball or beanbag back and forth until you have said the whole sentence.

Variation:
- For a challenge, write the line from the rhyme or poem on a strip of paper. Cut the strip into words and hold up or point to the word that is being said.

Why?
Your child learns that sentences can be divided into words.
Find the Compound Words

Linguistic Awareness

What You Need:
- list of compound words
- pictures of items that illustrate compound words and their parts (for example, a picture of a cup and a picture of a cake for “cupcake”)

What You Do:
1. Tell your child that some words are made up of two shorter words put together and that you are going to use some of those words to play a word game.
2. Say a compound word and ask your child to repeat it. For instance, say, “Say cupcake,” and let him or her repeat the word.
3. Help your child to select the pictures that show the parts of the word, such as “cup” and “cake.”
4. Continue with several other words on the list below.

Why?
Your child learns to listen for the smaller segments of language that are contained in words.

Word List:
Cowboy, baseball, jellyfish, grasshopper, cupcake, doorbell, raincoat, bedroom, football, starfish, haircut, sailboat


Jump for a Rhyme

Linguistic Awareness

What You Need:
- rhyming dictionary such as The Scholastic Rhyming Dictionary (Scholastic, Inc., 1994) or online at www.rhymezone.com
- list of pairs of rhyming words
- list of pairs of non-rhyming words

What You Do:
1. Model the activity for your child. Say a pair of words that rhyme. For example, say, “Cat-bat. The end of those words sounds the same…The words rhyme. I’m going to jump for a rhyme!”
2. Say a pair of words that do not rhyme. Tell your child, “Those words don’t rhyme, so I’ll just sit down.”
3. Play the game with your child, beginning with several pairs that rhyme, and then add in some pairs that don’t rhyme.

Variation:
- To adjust level of activity, begin with one-syllable words and progress to two- and three-syllable words.

Why?
Your child will become aware of rhymes and learn to identify them.

**Mystery Sound**

**Linguistic Awareness**  
**MAKING PROGRESS: Segmenting Words**

**What You Need:**  
- index cards  
- glue or tape  
- pictures of items familiar to your child; a few items should begin with the same sound

**What You Do:**  
1. Make picture cards: Glue a picture on each index card. Spread the cards out on a table or on the floor.  
2. Choose a beginning sound, but don’t tell your child what it is. Collect the cards with pictures that begin with only that sound and give them to your child to hold.  
3. Tell your child that his or her job is to figure out what the mystery beginning sound is.  
4. Point to each picture on the cards that your child is holding and guide him or her in naming the pictures, emphasizing the first sounds. Help your child figure out the “mystery” first sound.

**Why?**  
Your child will learn that words are made up of sounds and learn to isolate the first sound in a word.

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**Rhyme-Out**

**Linguistic Awareness**  
**MAKING PROGRESS: Rhyming Words**

**What You Need:**  
- rhyming words

**What You Do:**  
1. Give your child some examples of words that rhyme. Then, start with a simple word with many rhyming possibilities (hat, tall, sing, bell)  
2. Take turns saying a word that rhymes with the first word until you run out of rhymes.  
3. If you can, make a list of the rhyming words on paper as they are said.

**Why?**  
Your child will learn to listen for and generate rhymes.