**Letter Memory**

**Print Knowledge**

**READY TO READ: Naming Letters**

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

**What You Do:**
1. Make the game cards: Choose 6 letters that you would like to practice with your child. Write each letter on two cards so that you have 6 pairs of cards.
2. Shuffle the cards and place them face down.
3. Ask your child to turn over two cards. If the cards match, the child names the letter and 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.

**Why?**
Your child becomes familiar with the names and shapes of the letters of the alphabet.


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**My Word Box**

**Print Knowledge**

**READY TO READ: Reading Simple Words**

**What You Need:**
- small box
- index cards
- marker

**What You Do:**
1. Write your child's name on the box.
2. Have your child decorate his or her box.
3. Ask your child to tell you 3 or 4 of his or her favorite words or words that are important to him or her.
4. Write these words on index cards. Your child can keep the special words in his or her own box.
   - Repeat steps 3 and 4 every few days.
5. Your child can include pictures on the cards that illustrate some of the words.
6. Every few days, ask your child to "read" you his or her cards and tell you about the words.

**Why?**
Your child will begin to recognize words that are important to him or her.

Pick a Letter

Print Knowledge
READY TO READ: Naming Letters

What You Need:
• brown paper bag
• plastic letters

What You Do:
1. Place 10 letters in the bag.
2. Model the activity by closing your eyes and picking a letter. As you feel the letter, describe what letter you think you’ve picked. Open your eyes and confirm your answer with your child.
3. Have your child close his or her eyes and pick out a letter.
4. Ask your child, “What letter do you think it is?” If the child is having trouble identifying the letter, give clues.

Variations:
• Hide the letters in a bin of sand or rice.
• Have your child match the letter that he or she finds to words you have printed on a piece of paper.

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


Word Jump

Print Knowledge
READY TO READ: Reading Simple Words

What You Need:
• large index cards (or paper)
• marker
• list of simple words (see list below)

What You Do:
1. Choose eight words that your child is learning.
2. Write each word in large print in lowercase letters on an index card.
3. Spread the words out on the floor.
4. Say a word, and ask your child to jump to that word and read it.
5. Take turns saying words and jumping to them.

Why?
Your child will begin to recognize simple words.

Sample simple words:
And, the, in, is, on, you, cat, it, my, we, me, with

Guess What’s Inside

**Emergent Writing**

**READY TO READ: Printing Name/Invented Spelling**

**What You Need:**
- large box
- markers
- lightly colored plain wrapping paper
- item familiar to your child that will fit inside the box and can be named with one word

**What You Do:**
1. Place the item in the box.
2. Wrap the box with the wrapping paper.
3. Tell your child that there is something in the box. You and your child could discuss some ideas about what might be inside. Place the wrapped box on a table with some markers next to it.
4. Ask your child to write his or her name on the wrapping paper, and try to write a guess as to what is inside. All attempts at writing a word should be encouraged!
5. To help, ask your child to say the word out loud that he or she wants to write. Help him or her listen for the sounds in that word and write the letters that make those sounds.
6. Later, open the box and show what is inside. The box can be reused another day with new paper on it.

**Why?**
Your child will learn that writing has a purpose and engage in beginning attempts at writing.

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Send a Message

**Emergent Writing**

**READY TO READ: Message Composition**

**What You Need:**
- shoebox decorated as a mailbox with slot cut in the top
- paper and pencil or crayons

**What You Do:**
1. Model writing a short message to your child in order to introduce the activity. The message can include both text and pictures that represent text.
2. Explain to your child that he or she can write a message to you and put it in the mailbox. Your child can use scribbles, letters, and/or pictures for the message.
3. Be sure to write a message back to your child. You can leave it near your child’s bed, on the kitchen table, or in his or her own “mailbox.”

**Why?**
Your child will practice using written language and drawings to communicate a message.

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**First Sound Sort**

**Linguistic Awareness**

**READY TO READ:** Segmenting Words

**What You Need:**
- 3 bins or baskets
- paper bag
- several objects that begin with each of three different letter sounds

**What You Do:**
1. Label the outside of each bin or basket with one of the three chosen letter sounds.
2. Show the bins to your child. Review the names and sounds of the three letters.
3. Place all of the objects in a paper bag.
4. Have your child pick one object out of the bag at a time. Help your child name what he or she has chosen and say the first sound of the object's name.
5. Tell your child to put the object in the bin or basket that is labeled with the first sound of the object's name.
6. Repeat until all of the objects have been sorted into the appropriate bins.
7. Take a few minutes at the end of this activity to go through each bin with your child, naming each object while emphasizing its first sound.

**Why?**
Your child learns to listen for and isolate the first sound of a word. Your child also learns that a letter sound can appear in many different words.


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**Stretched-out Story**

**Linguistic Awareness**

**READY TO READ:** Segmenting Words

**What You Need:**
- a picture book, poem or nursery rhyme

**What You Do:**
1. Say to your child, "I am going to tell you a story, but some words will sound a little different. I'm going to stretch out some words so that you can hear all of the sounds in the word. Your job is to put back together each word that I stretch. Let's try a word for practice. Ssss-k-ooo-llll. What word am I stretching?"
2. Read or tell the story, rhyme or poem to your child. When you get to an important place, character or object in the story, say that word stretched out sound by sound. For example, "One day, Karen went to the sss-t-ore. She had to buy some mmm-i-lll-k for her sister."
3. As you tell the story, pause for your child to help say the word that you have stretched out.

**Why?**
Your child will learn about the individual sounds in speech and that words are made up of sounds.

**Linguistic Awareness**

**READY TO READ: Segmenting Compound Words**

**What You Need:**
- list of compound words (see below)

**What You Do:**
1. Tell your child that some words are made up of two words put together, and you can take away part of a word and have a new word.
2. Say a word and ask your child to say the word back to you. For instance, say, “Say cowboy,” and let him or her repeat the word.
3. Tell your child, “Now say it again, but don’t say ‘boy’.” Model the correct response: “Cow…boy, without ‘boy’. Cowboy without ‘boy’ is ‘cow’.”
4. Continue with several other words on the list below. Ask your child to try to think of other compound words.

**Why?**
Your child will learn that smaller segments of language are contained in words.

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