



# COCHRANE -FOUNTAIN CITY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

## At-Home Activities to support Letter Names and Letter Sounds

**Family Information:** Learning to match a written symbol (a letter) to its name and its sound is an important foundation to learning to read, and it's harder than you might think for young children. Imagine looking at 26 new symbols your brain hasn't learned yet and having to remember a name AND a sound for each one. Fortunately, practicing letter names and sounds at home can be quick, easy, and playful!

### Sing:

- Find ways to incorporate singing the alphabet into daily routines. Singing the ABCs when brushing teeth and washing hands provides many opportunities to practice.
- When singing the ABC song, slow down the "L, M, N, O, P" so that children clearly hear each separate letter.
- You can also try singing the ABC song to the tune of "Mary Had a Little Lamb" or "London Bridge is Falling Down." Singing to a new tune helps us slow down and think about the letters.
- Sometimes help your child point to the letters while they sing a version of the ABC song. You may want to use magnetic letters or print the [chart found here](#).

### Connect to Everyday Life:

- Point out the letters in your child's name as you help them read and write it. Children often learn the letters in their name first.
- Even when your child has only learned a few letters, point out these letters in real life throughout the day—on packages, signs, clothing, or in books you read to your child.

### Play:

- Learn and Practice: Write a letter or show a letter card. (You can make your own with index cards or sticky notes or print and cut out the [cards found here](#).) Have your child say the letter name and sound (example: S says /sss/). If they don't know it yet, you say it and have them repeat you.
- Sensory play: Show a letter card and have your child write it in a cookie tray with a thin layer of rice or salt, or make it with Play-doh. While they form the letter, have them say the letter name and sound (example: S says /sss/). As they get better at this, say the letter name or sound without showing them a card (example: "Can you draw an S? What does an S say?" "Can you draw the letter that makes the /mmm/ sound?").
- Matching Game: As students learn capital and lowercase letters, put some of the letters they know on sticky notes—one sticky note for the capital letter and one sticky note for the



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lowercase letter. Place all the sticky notes randomly on a wall or kitchen appliance and have them match the capital and lowercase letter together.

- Scavenger Hunt: Spread printed or magnetic letters on a flat space. Ask students to go on a scavenger hunt. "Can you bring me the letter T?" "Can you bring me the letter that makes the /b/ sound?"
- First Letter Match: As your child learns the sounds letters make, give them opportunities to match letters to the beginning sound of an object. Spread out some toys and then lay out the letters these toys begin with. (Letters can be on cards or sticky notes or you may print and cut out the [cards found here](#).) Ask your child to match each toy to the first letter in its name. (Example: D for a toy dinosaur).

**Final Tips for Letter Learning:** Keep learning time short, sweet, and joyful! Learning letters and sounds can take time, so it's important to be patient and keep activities light and fun. The more consistent and playful the learning, the more excited your child will be to engage with learning and begin their reading journey!

## **Reading Aloud to Your Child:**

While your child is learning letter names and sounds, they learn about reading from listening to adults read to them, and this is the most important way you can support your child at home in becoming a reader! Fifteen minutes of reading—for example, each night at bedtime—can make a huge difference in your child's readiness for learning to read.

- Choose books that are appropriate for your child's age and interests. For young learners, books with just a line or two of text on each page and engaging pictures are often favorites.
- Allow your child to choose which books they want to hear.
- Repeating books over and over may get boring for us as adults, but young children learn from the repetition and familiarity. If they want to read the same book again, then do!
- Talk about the pictures as you read.
- Build vocabulary by explaining new words while you read. (Example: "gigantic" is another word for really big.)
- Ask questions about the story. "What do you think that character is feeling on this page?" "What do you think will happen next?"

[Click here](#) for more tips on reading aloud to your child.