

Games to Teach Letters/Sounds

Spend time with children one on one to see what they really know....

1. **I'm thinking of something that starts with "T t" Game**
 - a. (give clues and see if they can guess) when they guess the word write it out on the white board for them to see. Associate spoken word with written word.
 - i. *You sit here to eat (table)
 - ii. *You chew with these (teeth)
 - iii. *You lick ice cream with this (tongue)
2. **Catching the letter train:**
 - a. Someone picks a letter & they are "the engine". In order to come aboard the train you have to come up with a word that begins with the letter chosen.
 - i. ie: letter "Ww" child could say wagon.
 - ii. Encourage children to come up with new words but if they can't think of one either give them clues or they may repeat a word.
 - b. Instead of making a "choo choo" sound you make the sound of the letter /w/ /w/ /w/.
3. **Grab bag:**
 - a. Put letters in a bag have a child grab a letter out of the bag tell you the name of the letter, sound it makes &/or word that begins with that letter.
4. **Up Down Game**
 - a. Long/Short game: Use words with long vowel sounds and short vowel sounds. If it has a long vowel sound they stand up, if it has a short vowel sound they sit down. You will have to play with them as this will be hard for younger children. Use only one letter a week don't try to use several letters.
 - i. ie: week 1 do Aa. week 2 do Ee etc.
 - ii. Example words: bit (sit), bite (stand), kit (sit), kite (stand)... other words you can use: cap, cape, met, meat, set, seat, bug, unicorn, mug, glue, cot, comb, mom, home.

- b. Letter sounds: hold up an (any letter you choose) "Rr" say if the word starts with an Rr stand up then say several words that start with an Rr when you say a word that doesn't start with an Rr sit down. Rabbit (stand), robot (stand), sun (sit)...
- 5. **The ship is loaded with** (great for gym end of the day games)
 - a. Pick a letter such as M.
 - b. Sit in a circle; roll a ball from one person to another.
 - c. As the child gets the ball they have to add something to the ship that starts with the letter m or whatever letter has been picked.
- 6. **Word Braids**
 - a. Have the children stand in a close circle. Explain that you want them to think of words that start with the sound ____.
 - b. To make the braid the children say a word that starts with that letter ie: t= train, tie, tuna etc. as the children say a word they cross their arms in front of them & hold hands with the children on either side of them.
 - c. After everyone has said a word everyone's hands should be crossed in front of them. Point out that you have made a word braid.
 - d. Now we will use magic to become unbraided (if that is a word) everyone keeps holding hands & twists around, going under the arm to uncross, or unbind, all of the arms. You will end up facing the opposite direction.
- 7. **Front, Middle, End and First, Middle and Last**
 - a. Children can become familiar with the meaning of these terms so as they begin to read they can recognize beginning sounds, ending sounds & sounds in the middle.
 - b. Example: Have the children close their eyes, play three instruments one at a time. Have a child say first I heard, in the middle I heard, Last I heard
 - c. Set out three objects ie: 3 counting bears red, yellow, blue. Ask the child what color is the bear in the front, middle, end.

d. Even when you line up you can talk about who is in the front of the line, middle & the end and how important each one of those spots are. We couldn't have a line without a first, middle & end.

8. I can spell anything (Do this in small groups)

- a. Have the children give you a simple 2-4 letter word. Write the word on the board. Show the children how this word is made up of letters.
- b. Give the children letters so that they too can spell the word
- c. If they said the word "pig" you could say I think this word starts with a p can you find a p. At the end is a g can you find a g in the middle is an i can you put the i between the p & g. Now let's spell it together. p-i-g or say the first sound p/p/p ask what letter makes that sound. Then say g/g/g etc.

9. create a game board- Use a shirt box & construction paper squares

- a. Have the children decide the path they should follow with these squares.
- b. Come up with something to put at the start & the finish. ie: start may be a bunny, finish may be a carrot patch.
- c. On each square write a letter out of alphabetical order.
- d. Get some pawns & die. Roll the die, move that many squares on the game board.
- e. When you land on the square you need to tell everyone what letter you landed on. If you need help you miss your next turn. As the children learn all their letters then they need to move onto the letters sound, after they have mastered the letter sounds then they need to come up with a word that starts with that letter. You can make other games using other learning tools ie: numbers, shapes, colors, words etc

10. Go on a letter hunt

- a. have the children go around the room looking for the letter of the day/week in your word labels around the room.
- b. If you go for a walk look for words in the neighborhood or letter of the week on license plates.
 - i. Take pictures and make a word/letter board showing all the words/letters you found

11. Rhyming games

- a. Rhymes are an excellent way to teach children pre- reading skills. Say a rhyme such as "rain rain go away come again another day".
- b. Have a child pick an object from the classroom such a pencil. Change the rhyme to "pencil pencil go away go away come again another day."
- c. Take a familiar rhyme & replace one rhyming words with another word that rhymes to change the poem.
- d. ie: Twinkle Twinkle little car how I wonder will you go far
- e. Old Mother Hubbard went to her cupboard to get her poor dog a stone. But when she got to the fair the cupboard had hair & so the poor dog had a bun. Children LOVE these silly rhymes.
- f. The song Down by the bay is a perfect example of this.

12. Grocery store letter hunt

- a. Choose a letter before going into the grocery store; see how many times you can find the letter while you're shopping. Maybe the letter is "C" you can find cheerios, corn, carrots, crackers, Chobani, Couscous etc. You can also do the same thing with numbers. Choose a number instead of a letter. Keep track of how many you find. Each time you go to the store see if you can find more than the last time or change letters/numbers.
- b. Use coupons and make up a shopping list for your child. Help them match the coupon picture to the item you are going to buy.

Note: these activities can sometimes making shopping easier as they are focusing on finding letters, items etc and may not see the toys and candy that they usually beg for...