

Inexpensive Literacy Materials and Activities



INEXPENSIVE LITERACY MATERIALS AND ACTIVITIES

- *Number and Counting Books*
- *ABC Books*
- *Shape, Color, Number and Letter Puzzles*
- *Pointers*
- *Photo Albums*
- *Balls*
- *Stickers*
- *Paper Plates*
- *Magnetic Shapes, Numbers*
- *Upper, lowercase magnetic letters*
- *Upper, lowercase foam letters*
- *Sponge Letters*
- *Buttons*
- *Cotton Balls*
- *Counting Chips*
- *Plastic Animals*
- *Stuffed Animals*
- *Play Dough*
- *Finger/Tempera Paint*
- *Yarn*
- *Cookie sheets for magnetic letters & numbers*
- *Muffin Tins for magnetic letters & numbers*
- *Gifts Bags (various sizes)*
- *Construction Paper*
- *Crayons*
- *Chalk*
- *Markers*
- *Index Cards*
- *Lunch Bags*
- *Sketch Paper*
- *Tissue Paper*
- *Paper Bags*
- *Children's Books*
- *Glue*
- *Craft Sticks*
- *Pipe Cleaners*
- *Decorative Sunglasses*
- *Magnifying Glasses*
- *Fish Net*

POINTERS

There are a variety of items that your child can use as pointers. Allow him to point out shapes, letters or words in books, newspapers, magazines, or in the environment. Items to use for pointers:

- *Unsharpened pencils*
- *Fly Swatters*
- *Backscratchers*
- *Wooden Spoons*
- *Craft Sticks (Put tip in glue, then dip it in glitter)*
- *Dowel Rods with Velcro on the end; attach any small item (a plastic insect, flower, etc.)*

ENVIRONMENTAL PRINT

Environmental print is the print we recognize from the colors, pictures, shapes, and words in the environment. This is usually the first print a child recognizes. We see it all around us (on labels, on food and clothing, logos on stores, restaurants, and signs).

There are a variety of activities to do with environmental print.

- *Look at the words on food items, store ads, coupons, and menus.*
- *Make books:*
 - *"My Favorite Restaurant"*
 - *"My Number Book"*
 - *"My ABC Book"*
 - *"My Book of Animals"*
 - *"My Book of Transportation Vehicles"*

LITERACY ACTIVITIES

MAKING LETTERS

Give your child the opportunity to write/make letters with:

- *Shaving cream*
- *Paint*
- *Pudding*
- *Sand*
- *Rice*
- *Etch-a-Sketch boards*

Make letters from:

- *Play Dough*
- *Pipe Cleaners*
- *Blocks*
- *Cotton Balls*
- *Construction Paper*

Form a large letter/number on the floor with masking tape. Let your child...

- *Walk around it.*
- *Hop around it.*
- *Crawl around it.*
- *Drive a small car around it.*

Cut out or write a letter/number on construction paper. Let your child glue on items that begin with that letter.

- *Buttons on B*
- *Noodles on N*
- *Cotton Balls on C*
- *Acorns on A*
- *(Gold) fish on F*

UPPER- AND LOWERCASE LETTERS

- *Print lowercase letters inside the cups of a muffin pan (use the letters in your child's name).*
- *Ask your child to match the lower case letters with magnetic uppercase letters.*

COUNTING

- *Print the numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 inside the cups of a muffin tin. Ask your child to count buttons and place them in the cups.*

LETTER DETECTIVE

- *Give your child a magnifying glass. Tell him he is a Letter Detective. Ask your child to use the magnifying glass to find shapes, colors, letters, numbers or words.*

“EYE” SPY

- *Give your child a pair of silly sunglasses. Have him play “eye” spy by looking around the house for letters or words.*

BURIED LETTERS

- *Put 2 inches of sand or rice in a dishpan. Bury plastic letters in the sand. Ask your child to dig for them. Ask him to name each letter as he discovers them.*

CATCH A LETTER

- *Fill a dishpan half full of water; add plastic or sponge shapes or letters. Give your child a small fish net to catch and name the shapes or letters.*

FISHING FOR LETTERS

- *Make a fishing pole from a dowel stick and yarn. Tie a magnet on the end. Cut fish shapes from construction paper and let your child decorate them. Write a letter on each one. Put a paper-clip on the fish where the mouth would be. Spread the fish on the floor and let your child catch a letter and tell you the name of each letter.*

LETTER SORTING

- *Give your child a handful of plastic letters (both upper- and lowercase letters). Ask your child to find letters with straight lines/ slanted lines/ curved lines/ circles. As your child advances, ask him to name each letter he finds.*

ALPHABET HOKEY POKEY

- *Print one letter on several index cards, and spread them out on the floor. Ask your child to select a letter and dance with it.*

*You put the letter "M" in.
You put the letter "M" out.
You put the letter "M" in,
And you shake it all about.
You do the Hokey Pokey and
You turn yourself around.
That's what it's all about.*

FUN WITH COOKIE SHEETS

Ask your child to use magnetic letters to form her name on the cookie sheet. Ask her to practice forming her telephone number. Are there additional words your child can form?

YARN NAMES

- *Print your child's name on a piece of construction paper. Place glue on the outline of each letter. Give your child small pieces of yarn to glue on the letters. This activity can also be done with uncooked pasta or cotton balls.*

WIGGLE WORMS

- *Write the words "Wiggle Worms" on a gift bag. Cut index cards in half, print a letter on each one, and place letters inside the bag. Draw a worm on several cards, and add them to the bag. Let your child close his eyes, reach into the bag, and draw out a card. If it is a letter, he names it. If it is a worm (or sticker), he says, "Wiggle worm," and wiggles.*
- *This can also be done with turkey stickers at Thanksgiving (gobble, gobble), Santa stickers at Christmas (ho, ho, ho), or any other items you would select.*

BEAN BAG TOSS

- *Write letters in random order on a shower curtain. Provide your child with a beanbag. Ask him to throw the bean bag and name the letter that it lands on.*

SHAKE IT

- *Fill empty film containers with a variety of materials: beans, rice, paperclips, keys, marbles. Glue each object on an index card. Ask your child to shake the container, listen for the sound, and place the container by the corresponding object.*

Additional games:

- *Find the loudest/softest sound*
- *Fill two containers with the same material, and have your child match each pair that sounds the same.*

LETTERS, LETTERS

- *Print lower case letters on paper plates. Ask your child to name each letter and print the corresponding upper case letter.*

RHYMING ITEMS

- *Find a variety of objects that rhyme:*
 - *van/fan*
 - *cat/hat*
 - *bone/phone*
 - *rock/sock*
 - *car/star*

Ask your child to choose an object from the basket, say the name, and then search for the one that rhymes.

FUN WITH PAPER BAGS

- *Color red, green, blue, yellow, brown, and black circles on the outside of 6 paper bags. Ask your child to place corresponding colored objects in the bags (use crayons, markers, chalk, colored letters, blocks, pipecleaners, buttons, plastic animals). You can also print numbers on bags and ask your child to count out items and place them in the bags.*

FUN WITH ANIMALS

- *Select a small stuffed animal. Assist your child in making up a story about the animal, using as many adjectives as possible.*

SOUND SURPRISE

- *Put several objects (dog, ball, pencil, car, doll) in a "surprise bag." Have your child take an item out of the bag and name it. Ask him to say the beginning sound.*

PASS THE PAIL

- *Put a variety of letters in a sand pail. Ask your child to choose a letter, say its name, and think of a word that begins with the letter.*

HOW MANY WORDS?

- *Give your child 4-5 chips or small blocks. Say a short sentence such as, "My name is Madison." Have your child repeat the sentence, placing a chip on the table for each word.*

MYSTERY WORDS

- *Put several plastic animals into a bag. Ask your child to select one item, name the animal, and describe the animal.*

WRITING CORNER

Give your child many opportunities to write.

Things to write on:

- *Variety of colored paper*
- *Stationery*
- *Receipts*
- *Memo pads*
- *Old forms*
- *Post cards*
- *Envelopes*
- *Etch- a- Sketch boards*
- *Clipboards with paper*
- *Post-It notes*

Things to write with:

- *Markers*
- *Pens*
- *Pencils*
- *Crayons*
- *Chalk*

Accessories:

- *Tape*
- *Ruler*
- *Hole punch*
- *Scissors*
- *Catalogs*

FAMILY WRITING

- *Take your child on an excursion (library, grocery store, zoo, circus). When you get home, ask your child to draw a picture about the event. Ask him to tell you about her picture. Older children can write words or sentences about their pictures.*

JOURNAL WRITING

- *Purchase a notebook/folder. Print your child's name on the front. Allow her to write and draw about her experiences. You may want to write what she says about her page. Ask her to draw illustrations.*

MESSAGE BOARD

- *Provide a "dry-erase" board for your child. Ask him to leave family members important messages. Read the messages out loud.*

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 a word on the left side of the sack. Place the sacks on top of each other and attach with a stapler, brads, etc.*

PICTURE BOX

- *Cut out interesting pictures from magazines with your child. Have your child glue the pictures on paper and write and or dictate stories about the picture.*

READING ALOUD

- *Read with your child daily. Talk about the story. Ask your child the names of the characters, the settings. Ask your child to draw a picture about his favorite part of the story.*

FAMILY PHOTOS

- *Take a photograph of each member of your family. Print the name of each family member on the bottom of the picture. Place the pictures in a photo album.*

FAMILY NAMES

- *Print the names of family members on a ball. Play catch with your child and ask him to “read” the name under his “catching” hands. Also print numbers and letters on balls.*

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