

## What else can I do?

- Using advertising catalogues and other printed material look for words that start with the same letter, eg saucepan, socks, surfboard. You can talk about the first letter and sound in these words. "Look, here's another word that starts with the letter 's', so we know that word starts with the 'sss' sound."
- Books provide lots of opportunities to explore print in different forms. As well as reading the story, you can point out individual words. "This word is 'boy' it starts with the letter 'b'. Lets see if we can find other words on this page that start with the same letter."
- Children need lots of opportunities to become familiar with letters and sounds. You can extend your child's understanding of sound-letter links just by talking about letters and sounds as part of your everyday conversations.



## Great resources

- Magnetic letters - great for sticking on the fridge
- Pavement chalk - practice writing on the footpath
- Play dough and plasticine - for making letters, you could write the letters on paper for your child to use as a guide
- Free websites - [www.kidzone.ws](http://www.kidzone.ws), [www.internet4classrooms.com](http://www.internet4classrooms.com), [www.k-3teacherresources.com](http://www.k-3teacherresources.com), [www.literacycenter.net](http://www.literacycenter.net)
- Free phone apps - letter quiz



Government of South Australia

Department for Education and  
Child Development



## Laying Foundations for Literacy Success

### Linking letters with sounds

Linking sounds and letters is one of the most important skills children need when they are learning to read and write.

Although your child will not begin formal reading and writing instruction until they start school, there are lots of things you can do at home to help your child learn these skills as part of their literacy learning.

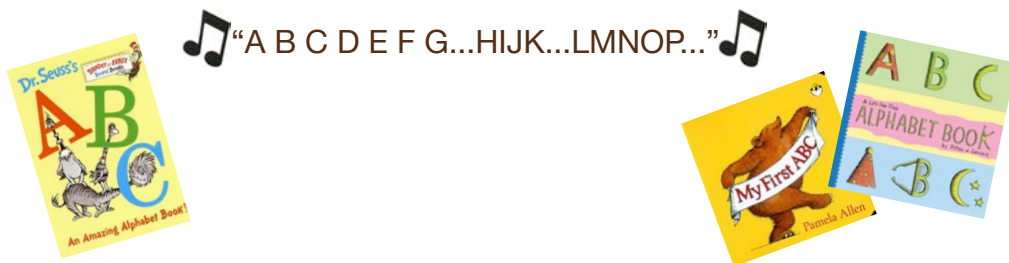


Helping your child learn about letters and sounds does not mean buying expensive games or activities. This brochure talks about things you can do to help your child as part of your everyday interactions at home and while you are out and about.

Learning about letters and sounds should be fun! By sharing this learning with your child in relaxed and enjoyable activities, you will help them lay the foundations for learning to read and write.

## Learning the alphabet

- Borrow alphabet books or letter puzzles from your local library and share these with your child. Sing the alphabet song as you point to each letter. This will help your child to learn the individual names for all 26 letters. 26 letters is a lot to learn! Children need lots of practice before they know them all.



## Talking about letters and sounds

- When talking to children about letters it is important not to confuse letter names with sounds.

eg *"This is the letter 'b' ('bee')"*.

*When we write words, the letter 'b' is used to show the 'buh' sound."*



Hi! My name is 'bee'

A **letter** is something you can **see**.  
A **sound** is something you can **hear**.

## Why are the sounds of letters important?

- The words we say are made up of **individual sounds**. Hearing the sounds in words is tricky because we do not break words up into the individual sounds when we are talking.
- Children need to be aware of sounds in spoken words in readiness to write the sound they hear.

"cat" = 'c' - 'a' - 't'



**Letters are sounds written down.**

## Begin with first sounds and letters

- To help your child understand the link between sounds and written letters, focus on the first letter and the sound it makes.
- Point out words in books, signs and labels that start with the same letter. Talk about the letter name and the first sound in the word. For example, "Look at this writing...this word starts with the letter 'M'. That shows us that the word starts with the 'mmm' sound."



## Bringing meaning to print

- Point out written words and letters in everyday activities.
- To make it meaningful for your child you might like to start by looking for written words that start with the same letter as your child's name
- Start with the first letter: "Look at the sign...that's a letter 'p', like in your name... 'p' for Patrick and 'p' for Parking...and Pizza Hut... and Post Office! Let's find some more words that start with 'p'!"



## Encouraging first attempts at writing

- As your child learns about letters they may show interest in writing. Your child's first attempts will look very different to 'real' writing. It is important to encourage these early attempts.
- Try writing letters in sand or dirt with a stick, or use your finger to write in shaving foam or paint.
- When you are writing, talk about what you are doing: "We need more soap in the bathroom so I am writing the word soap on the shopping list. I am starting with the letter 's' it makes a 'sss' sound."

