

Getting Started

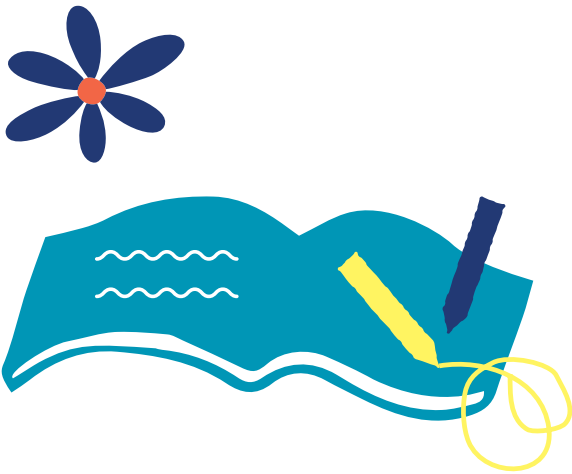
Dear Parent/Caregiver,

This guide is designed to help your child learn uppercase and lowercase letter, names and shapes sounds, which are important building blocks for becoming a strong reader. Young children develop letter knowledge through clear, age-appropriate instruction paired with plenty of practice. In this guide, you'll find simple, highly-engaging games and activities that encourage your child to see, say, and write each letter. All of our activities are aligned to research on how children learn. We hope this guide brings joy and supports your child's early reading journey—one letter at a time!



Tips for Success

- **First teach names and shapes, then sounds**
Start with activities that help your child learn the shape and name of each lowercase and uppercase letter. After that, choose activities that focus on the sounds each letter makes.
- **Lowercase letters are the most important**
Most of the words in books and daily life use lowercase letters. Prioritize opportunities to practice lowercase letters.
- **Teach the most common letters early**
Letters like S, A, T, I, P, and N are used in many simple 2-3 letter words. Teaching these letters first will help your child start reading and spelling basic words.



Name that Letter

Upper and Lowercase Identification

Why is this skill important?

It's important for your child to know the names of letters because most letter names contain the sound that the letter makes. Therefore, the letter name can support when your child begins to learn the sound the letter makes.

Note: In the back of this guide, there is a set of Uppercase and Lowercase Letter Cards to cut out and use for many of the activities.

Activity 1: Draw a Letter

Materials: Uppercase Letter Cards, paper and pencil, or some of the materials shown in the pictures

Preparation: Create a deck of Uppercase Letter Cards for 3–5 letters you want to teach and/or review.

Directions:

1. Have your child choose a card and say the letter's sound.
2. Ask them to write the matching lowercase letter as shown in the pictures.

Activity Modification: Do the activity with Lowercase Letter Cards and have your child write the matching uppercase letter.



Container with sand, salt or sugar



Sidewalk chalk or chalk marker



Ziploc bag or resealable bag with shaving cream or gel



Name that Letter

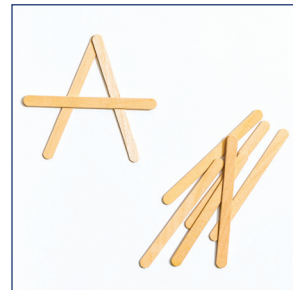
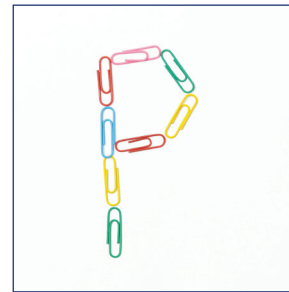
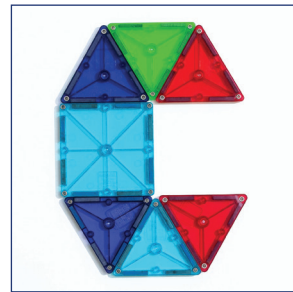
Upper and Lowercase Identification

Activity 2: Name It, Build It, Write It

Materials: paper and pencil, a set of household or play materials, as shown in the pictures in the pictures

Directions:

1. Say the sound of a letter you want to teach and/or review one at a time.
2. Encourage your child to name the letter that makes each sound.
3. Prompt your child to use materials to build the letter.
4. Encourage your child to write the letter. When finished, have your child say the letter's sound.
5. Repeat for all letters your child is learning.



Match It

Upper and Lowercase Matching

Why is this skill important?

Matching uppercase and lowercase letters helps children understand that both shapes are the same letter and make the same sound. This is important because most of the words in books and daily life use lowercase letters.

Activity 1: Letter Sort

Materials: Uppercase Letter Cards, Lowercase Letter Cards, two small bowls

Preparation:

- Make a deck of cards using 3–5 Uppercase Letter Cards and their matching Lowercase Letter Cards.
- Mix the cards and put them in a pile in front of your child.
- Label one bowl “uppercase” and the other “lowercase.”

Directions:

1. Have your child pick one card at a time, say the letter name, and put it in the correct bowl. If your child is ready to work on letter sounds, have them say the letter name and the sound it makes.
2. Repeat this until all the cards are sorted.



Match It

Upper and Lowercase Matching

Activity 2: Letter Puzzle

Materials: Index cards, markers, scissors

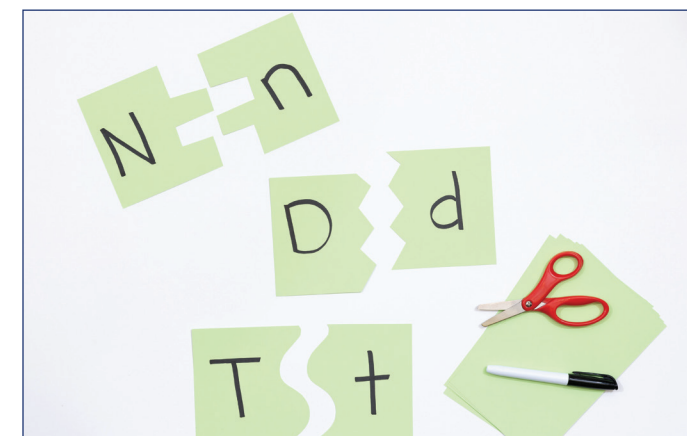
Preparation:

- Write an uppercase letter on the left side of an index card and the matching lowercase letter on the right side for each letter your child is learning.
- Cut each card in a unique way down the middle so each piece has only one correct match.
- Mix all the pieces together.

Directions:

1. Have your child find the matching puzzle pieces.
2. When they make a match, ask them to say the letter's name and sound.

Activity challenge: For extra writing practice, have your child write the letters on the cards.



Activity 3: Letter Parking Lot

Materials: Toy cars, dry-erase marker, paper

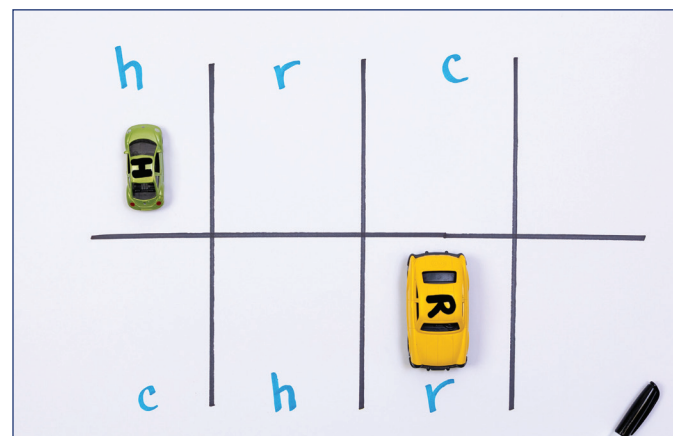
Preparation:

- Draw a car parking lot on a piece of paper with spaces for each toy car (see picture below).
- Write a lowercase letter in each parking space and put the matching uppercase letter on each car with a dry-erase marker.

Directions:

1. Have your child “drive” each car to the parking lot and park it in the space with the matching lowercase letter.
2. As they park each car, ask them to say the letter's name and sound.
3. Erase the letters and rewrite them in a new parking spot for additional practice.

Tip: To reuse the “parking lot,” put lowercase letter cards or sticky notes on each spot instead of writing on the piece of paper.



Match It

Upper and Lowercase Matching

Activity 4: Scavenger Hunt

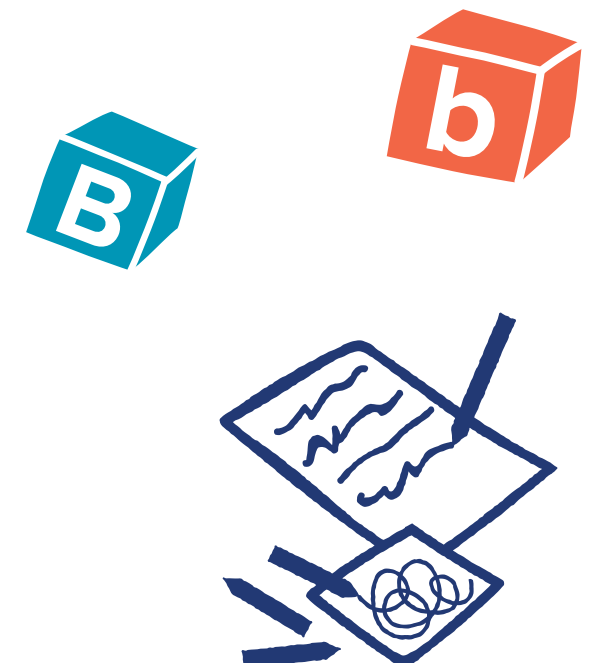
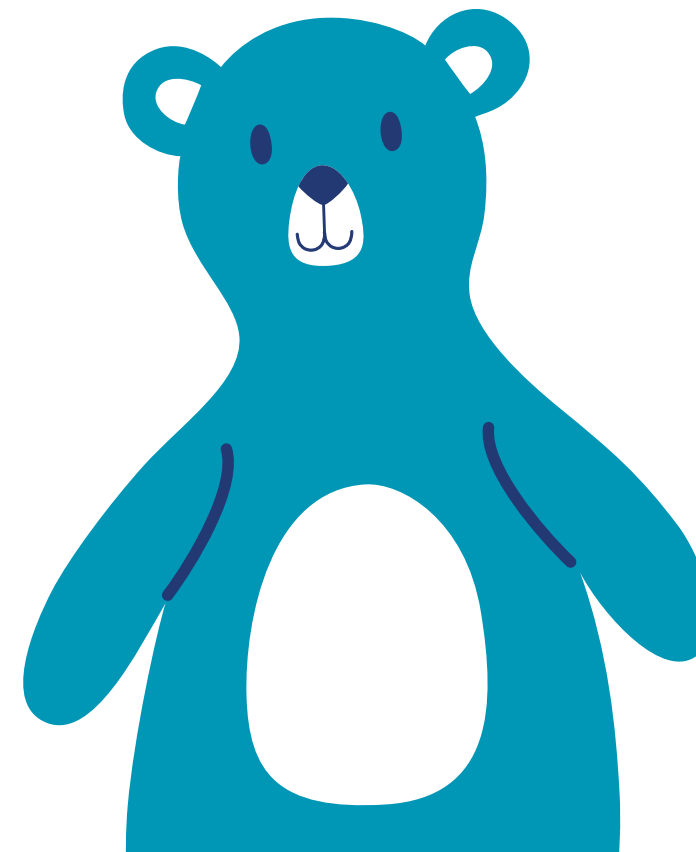
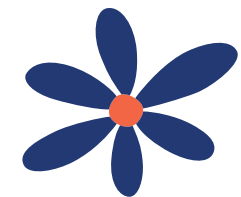
Materials: Uppercase Letter Cards, matching Lowercase Letter Cards

Preparation:

- Make a deck of Uppercase Letter Cards for the letters you want to teach and/or review.
- Hide the matching Lowercase Letter Cards around the room.

Directions:

1. Have your child pick an Uppercase Letter Card from the deck.
2. Ask them to say the letter's name and sound.
3. Prompt them to look around the room and find the matching Lowercase Letter Card.



Match the Letter Sounds

Uppercase and Lowercase Sound Matching

Why is this skill important?

Matching sounds to letters is the foundation for early reading. When children know which sound each letter makes, they can begin sounding out and spelling basic words.

Activity 1: Letter Hopscotch

Materials: Sidewalk chalk, rock or bean bag

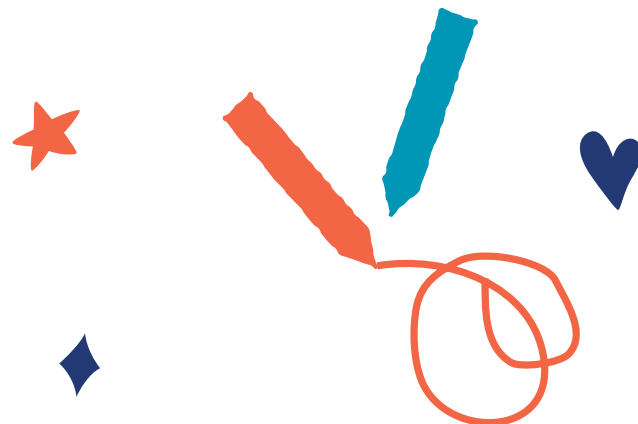
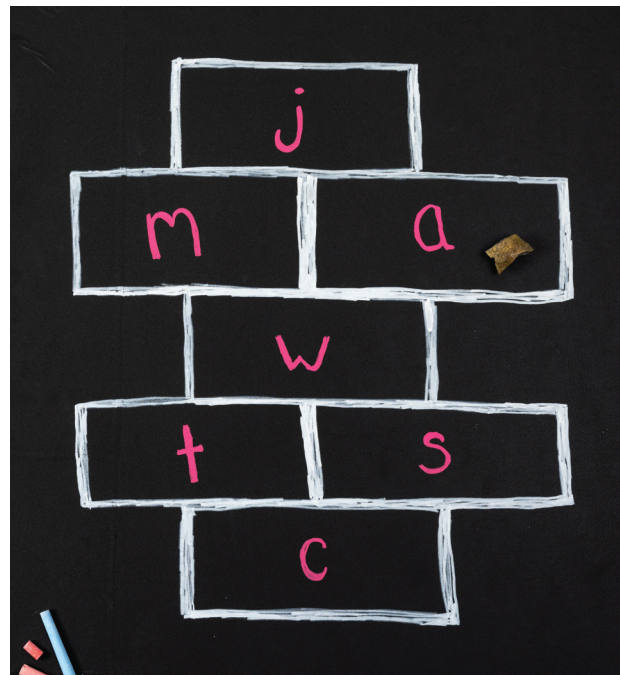
Preparation:

- Draw a hopscotch board on the sidewalk.
- Write a lowercase or uppercase letter in each square, depending on what your child needs to practice.

Directions:

1. Play hopscotch with your child by tossing the rock into a square and having your child hop to that square.
2. When they land on the square with the rock, have your child say the letter's name and sound.

Activity challenge: For extra writing practice, have your child write the letters on the squares.



Match the Letter Sounds

Uppercase and Lowercase Sound Matching

Activity 2: Fly Away Letters

Materials: Construction paper, markers

Preparation:

- Write one lowercase or uppercase letter on each piece of construction paper.
- Fold each paper into a paper airplane, or let your child do the folding.

Directions:

1. Invite your child to throw the paper airplanes around the room.
2. Have them pick up one airplane at a time, open it, and say the letter's name, and sound.



Activity 3: Letter Maze

Materials: Masking tape, marker, toy car or game piece

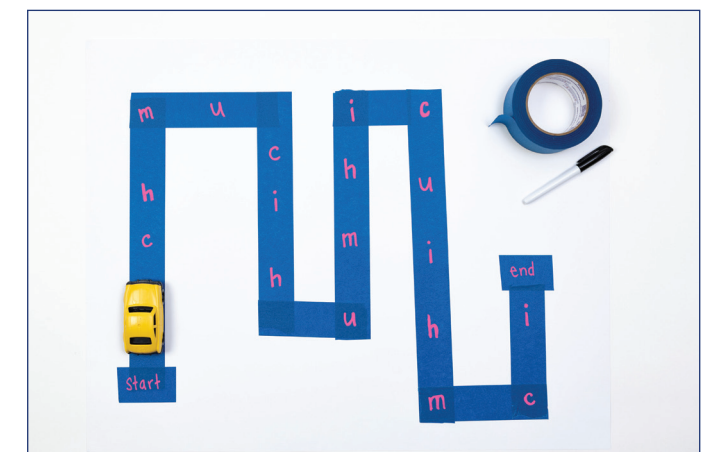
Preparation:

- Use masking tape to make a maze on the floor.
- Write a lowercase or uppercase letter on the tape every few inches, depending on what your child needs to practice.

Directions:

1. Give your child a toy car or game piece.
2. As they move it along the maze, ask your child to say each letter's name and sound.

Tip: Write the letters on sticky notes so that you can reuse the maze with different letters.



Match the Letter Sounds

Uppercase and Lowercase Sound Matching

Activity 4: Letter Bowling

Materials: Lowercase Letter Cards, recycled plastic water bottles, marker, ball, masking tape

Preparation:

- Make a set of Lowercase Letter Cards.
- Put a strip of tape on each water bottle. Write the matching uppercase letter on the tape.
- Set up the bottles on the floor like bowling pins.

Directions:

1. Ask your child to pick a Lowercase Letter Card.
2. Have them say the letter's name and sound.
3. Invite them to roll a ball to knock down the matching uppercase letter.
4. Help your child reset the bottles.
5. Repeat for all the letters in the deck.

Activity Modification: Do the activity with Uppercase Letter Cards and write lowercase letters on the water bottles.



Lowercase Letter Cards

Cut out and reuse for multiple activities

a	b	c	d
e	f	g	h
i	j	k	l
m	n	o	p
q	r	s	t
u	v	w	x
y	z		

Visit bklynlib.org/kids-read for more tips and activities

Uppercase Letter Cards

Cut out and reuse for multiple activities

A	B	C	D
E	F	G	H
I	J	K	L
M	N	O	P
Q	R	S	T
U	V	W	X
Y	Z		

Visit bklynlib.org/kids-read for more tips and activities

Use this space to keep track of the letters your child is learning.

Write the letters you are working on in the left column, and note your child's progress in the right columns. Take your time. Every child learns at their own pace. You're doing great by practicing together!

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Ready, Set, Letters! was developed through a partnership between Brooklyn Public Library and The Reading Institute, an organization dedicated to developing, implementing, and expanding the reach of early literacy instruction and interventions aligned to the Science of Reading. Generous support for this partnership was provided by the Heckscher Foundation for Children.



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Ready, Set, Letters!