**Objective**

To read uppercase and lowercase letters.

5–9 ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQRSTUVWXYZ
5–9 abcdefghijklmnopqrstuvwxyz

**DOMAIN**

Literacy: Alphabet Knowledge

**RATIONALE**

Knowledge of the alphabet is an essential component of learning to read and write. Key findings of The National Early Literacy Panel Report identify alphabet knowledge—knowledge of the names of printed letters and sounds associated with printed letters—as a key predictor to later literacy achievement.

**RELATED SKILLS**

- Visual Discrimination ................................................................. 97
- Prints Uppercase and Lowercase Letters in Sequence .................. 125
- Prints Personal Data .................................................................... 136

**Sequence**

**SEQUENCE OF PREREQUISITE SKILLS**

The following prerequisite skills are included as a general guide for planning your instruction. Before a child is expected to read letters, she should be able to:

- visually discriminate forms and letters. (See Visual Discrimination.)
- recite the alphabet.

**TEACHING SEQUENCE**

1. Initially, Teach at the Receptive Level

   Initially, teach a child to read letters at the receptive level. For example, have the child match identical letters. When the child can consistently match identical letters, have her point to a letter when you say the letter name.

2. Next, Teach at the Expressive Level

   Once the child can consistently match and identify letters, teach her to name the letters. For example, show the child the letter d, and have her say its name.
Recommendations for Effective Teaching

TEACH UPPERCASE LETTERS FIRST
It is best to teach uppercase letters first. They are easier to distinguish from each other. Begin with letters in the children’s names. Then do other letters, a few at a time. Once the children can identify uppercase letters, introduce lowercase letters. Begin with letters in the children’s names then do the others.

CALL ATTENTION TO SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES IN LETTERS
Similar letters may be difficult to distinguish. Help the child distinguish a letter by giving her special tips for that letter. For example, if the child confuses b with d, show the child a card with the word “bed.” Draw a bed over the letters. Write b at the head of the bed; write d at the foot of the bed. Say, “This word is bed. It begins with b and ends with d.” This gives a strong visual memory for the child each time she writes the letter.

TEACH CHILDREN TO READ ALTERNATE FORMS
The letters a and g can be written in two different ways. To avoid confusion, show children the a and g in a book and the a and g on the alphabet chart in the classroom.

DISPLAY AN ALPHABET BORDER AND PROVIDE DESK TAPES
As an aid to teaching letter names, display an alphabet border and refer to it often. Pair each letter with a picture of an object that begins with that letter. An alphabet can be taped to each child’s desk to provide a model for writing.

PROVIDE CHILDREN WITH NAME CARDS
Prepare a name card for each child and use it to label a child’s cubby. You can use name cards in a variety of ways to get children to recognize and read letters: in the Writing Center where children use them as a model when they write; on “turns lists” so children know which centers they go to on a particular day; on a job chart so children know their assignment for the week.

ATTACH MEANING TO LETTERS
Letters have little or no meaning for some children. Children who have had very limited experience with letters in their environment do not attach meaning to them. Rather than presenting letters as symbols, associate letters with sounds and concrete objects as much as possible (e.g., associate the letter B with a Bee; P with the vegetable Peas; S with See; J with the bird Jay, and so on; use environmental print/logos to convey that letters/words have meaning).

INCLUDE WITH OTHER ALPHABET ACTIVITIES
Encourage children to read letters while engaged in a variety of alphabet activities. For example,
- children name the letters when doing an alphabet puzzle.
- during transitions you hold up a letter card, and say, for example, “If your name begins with this letter, read the letter and then line up for lunch.”
- During circle time you hold up a name card and ask the child whose name it is to read the first letter or all the letters in her name.
- children write their own names and read the letters as they write using name cards as models.
Factors That Impact Development

Be alert to factors that might affect development. If you observe some difficulties, refer the family to the appropriate medical professional. Keep daily anecdotal notes on the child and include the child’s strengths and weaknesses.

CHILD HAS VISION PROBLEMS
Some vision problems that may cause difficulty in reading letters include astigmatism (blurring effects), poor visual acuity (inability to focus on an object or a printed symbol and perceive a single, clear image), farsightedness, and nearsightedness. If you suspect that a child has a vision problem, refer her to a medical professional.

CHILD HAS ARTICULATION PROBLEMS
Some children have articulation problems and may substitute, omit, or distort sounds. Articulating a letter name is a different skill from that of reading a letter. Therefore, a child may be able to read a letter but may simply pronounce some letter names incorrectly. Provide the child with an accurate speech model. Have the child practice any letter name that she finds difficult to articulate. Some articulation difficulties will improve with time and practice. Others may need the help of a medical professional.

READ WITH YOUR CHILDREN
Here are some books that children and adults will enjoy reading and talking about together.

Alphabet Books
Beylon, Cathy and Fremont, Victoria. A Is for Astronaut.
Carter, David. Alpha Bugs.
Girnis, Margaret. ABC for You and ME.
Hoban, Tana. 26 Letters and 99 Cents.

Letter Buddies Alphabet Books
Letter Buddies Letter Books
Letter Buddies Starters
Letter Buddies Best Friends
Zoozoo and Letter Buddies books and materials are available exclusively through Curriculum Associates. Please visit our website www.CurriculumAssociates.com or contact your local sales representative for more details.

See the Read-to-Me Books on page 151 for other alphabet books.

COMMUNICATE WITH FAMILIES
• Send Home a Letter The Letter to Families suggests fun ways for families to reinforce classroom learning at home. It recommends activities to try and books to read with children. (See page 161 for a sample letter for this section.)
• Send Home the Learning Plan Give children a copy of the Learning Plan to share with their families. Encourage families to read and talk about the Learning Plan, “I am learning to read the letters of the alphabet.” (See page 169.)
3. Match and Snap

**Materials:**
- A shoebox.
- Twenty-six wooden clothespins.
- A marker.

**Group Size:** Individual.

**Preparation:** Do the following:
- Print the uppercase alphabet along the top of an open box. The alphabet should be printed about an inch below the rim. You may split the alphabet so that half the letters are on one side of the box and the other half are on the other side.
- Using a marker, print the uppercase letter on the clothespins.

**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Show the child how to attach the clothespins to the edge of the box. Position three clothespins on the box above the letter that makes a match.
- Invite the child to match the remaining clothespins to their corresponding letters.

**EXTENSIONS:**
- Repeat this activity with lowercase letters.
- Once the child can match uppercase or lowercase letters, adapt the materials so that the activity will require the child to match uppercase letters to lowercase letters. For example, print the lowercase alphabet on the box, and print uppercase letters on the clothespins.
4. Can You Find a Match?
**Materials:** Two identical sets of lowercase or uppercase letter cards.
**Group Size:** Small group.
**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Shuffle the two packs of cards, and place them face down on a table in front of the children.
- Have one child take a turn selecting any two cards, one from each deck. As the child selects two cards, she holds up the cards so that the other children can see them and then read the letter names.
- If she selects two identical cards, she keeps the pair of matching cards and takes a second turn to pick another two cards. If she selects two cards that do not match, she returns them to their original position, face down on the table.
- The next child takes a turn and repeats the routine.
- When all the cards have been matched, have the children count their pairs to see who has the most.

**EXTENSION:** Have children match lowercase letter cards to uppercase letter cards.

5. Letter Walk
**Materials:**
- Footprints cut from brown paper or wrapping paper.
- A marker.
- Tape.
**Group Size:** Individual or small group.
**Preparation:** On each of the footprints, print a different uppercase or lowercase letter. Arrange the footprints in a walking pattern on the floor, and tape them in place.
**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Tell children that they are going to walk and read letters at the same time.
- Demonstrate the letter walk. Look at the first footprint. Read the letter aloud and then step on the footprint.
- One by one, invite children to walk on and read all the footprints.

6. Grab Bag
**Materials:**
- Letter cards for each of the uppercase or lowercase letters.
- A paper bag.
**Group Size:** Small group.
**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Place uppercase and lowercase letter cards into a paper bag.
- Have a child reach into the bag without looking, pull out a letter card, and name the letter. One at a time, give the other children a turn.
- When all the letter cards have been identified, have the children place all the cards on a table and match the uppercase letters with the lowercase letters.

7. Alphabet Hopscotch
**Materials:**
- Sheet of wrapping paper or bulletin board paper (6’ long).
- A marker.
**Group Size:** Individual or small group.
**Preparation:** With the marker, draw a hopscotch diagram on the sheet of paper. In each section of the diagram, print a different letter of the alphabet. The letters may or may not be in alphabetical order.
**Procedure:** Demonstrate for the children by hopping onto one letter and saying its name. Give children a turn. Have them say the letter's name as they hop on the letter.

**VARIATION:** Play this game in the schoolyard. Use washable sidewalk chalk to draw a hopscotch and write the letters in the boxes.
8. **Musical Letters**

**Materials:**
- Letter cards, one for each child.
- A tape/CD player.
- A tape or CD.

**Group Size:** Small group or class.

**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Have children sit in a circle on the floor.
- Give each child a letter card.
- Tell children that when you start the music, they should start passing the letter cards around the circle.
- Tell them to keep passing the cards until you stop the music. When it stops, go around the circle and ask children to name the letter on the card they are holding.
- Continue the activity until each child has had a chance to read several letters.

9. **Go Fish**

**Materials:** Four identical sets of letter cards (playing-card size).

**Group Size:** Small group.

**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Pass out five cards to each child, and put the rest of the pack in the center of the table. Explain to the children that the goal is to get a set of four letter cards that are the same.
- Have players take turns asking other players for particular cards by saying the names of letters (e.g., “Do you have any Ps?”).
- If a player has the card, she gives it to the player who asked for it. If she does not have the card, she says, “Go fish,” and the child who asked picks a card from the pack.
- Once a player has four of the same card, she places the set of four face up on the table.
- At the end of the game, have players count how many sets of four they have.

10. **Letter Riddles**

**Materials:** A set of uppercase letter cards for each child.

**Group Size:** Individual, small group, or class.

**Procedure:** Do the following:
- Give each child a set of letter cards. (Use letter cards A–M the first time you play Letter Riddles. Use letter cards N–Z the second time you play.) Have each child randomly place the letter cards face up on her desk.
- Tell children that you will give them a letter clue. Their job is to find the letter, and then say its name. For example, “I am thinking of a letter that is the first letter in David’s name. What letter is it?” Ask each child to hold up the correct letter card and read the letter name.

**EXTENSION:** Play the riddle game again, but this time use lowercase letters.