

The California Language Arts Content Standards identify critical reading and writing skills that are predictors of literacy success. Possible experiences are listed by content area.

Concepts about Print

Name Cups Place cut-out letters of your child's name in a cup and have them put their names in order. Put letters to other family member's names in the cup as well and help them spell out those names. Have your child compare the letters in their names to other family member's names. A variation on this would be to have letters spread out on the table and have your child find the letters in their name to put in their cup.

Messaging Put your family member's names in a bag and have your child draw one out. Your child can then "write" a message to their "pen pal" (the person whose name they've drawn). Have them dictate a short message, draw pictures to illustrate and then deliver to their "pen pal" to read.

Treasure Hunt Family members search for objects using a set of cards with photos and drawings paired with words to guide them. They bring their "treasure" back to the group to share, demonstrating the match between the object and graphic. Encourage your child to look at the accompanying word.

Obstacle Course Set up an obstacle course for your child to practice a variety of motor skills (e.g., walking, running, balancing, crawling, etc.). Prepare written labels and instructions with pictures, signs and words for each part of the course.

For example, by the steps post a sign for "Steps" and the direction "Go Up", accompanied by an upward arrow and a simplistic drawing of a person climbing up steps. Before your child begins the course, show them each part of the course, and have them read or interpret the symbols and signs.

Phonological Awareness

Clap the Syllables Begin by saying your child's name. Then say the name in syllables, clapping for each beat. Encourage your child to clap the beat with you. Each family member's name is said and clapped in turn.

Broken Word Game Say to your child, "Guess what I'm saying", and say a word in syllables such as mo-tor-cy-cle, di-no-saur. Allow your child to take turns being the leader of the game with other family members.

Rhyming Games Take some pictures displaying rhyming words and spread them out on the table beginning with one pair of pictures and gradually expanding the set. To help your child find rhyming mates, each pair of rhyming pictures can have matching jagged, puzzle-like edges. Your child can match pairs, say the words represented by the pictures, and fit the pairs together.

What Did You Hear Have your child close their eyes and listen to the sounds around them. After approximately one minute, have your child open their eyes and describe what they think happened while their eyes were closed. You can add to the game by intentionally making sounds for the children to identify.

Find the Ticking Clock Find a wind up clock or timer that ticks and have your family members take turns hiding it while others cover their eyes. Then, guess where it is.



Alphabetic Principle

Magazine Letter Search Give your child magazine pages (or food flyers) and scissors and ask them to go on a letter search. Have your child cut out the letters they choose and glue them on a piece of paper. You can frame the search by asking your child to find letters in their name or you could print letters on cards and put them in a grab bag for your child to draw and search for.

Alphabet Soup Place foam, wooden or magnetic letters in a few large bowls with soup ladles. Give all players a small bowl. Family members each take a turn to take a ladle of letters. Each player explores their "serving", identifies their letters and compares with others. You can also add containers for your child to sort and count their letters.

Alphabet Bingo Make or purchase cards with upper case and lower case letters and a picture that represents the object.

Clay/Playdough Letters Children love to roll playdough or clay to make long "snakes". Encourage your child to form letters with their rolled clay.

Find the Letters in Your Name Divide a sheet of paper for your child that says "Letters in my name" written on one half, and "Letters not in my name" written on the other half. While out and about or inside your home ask your child to look for signs, labels, mail, books and other objects that have letters on them. Your child can then decide which half of the paper to write that letter on.

Some activities adapted from Ladders to Literacy A Preschool Activity Book by Angela Notari-Syverson, PhD., Rollanda E. O'Connor, Ph. D. and Patricia F. Vadasy, M.P.H

