

Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds and Other Active Ways to Teach the Alphabet

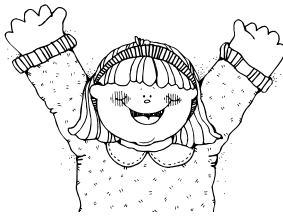
Presented by Heidi Butkus

Why should you use music to teach the alphabet?

No matter what, the children must eventually memorize the shape of each letter and its name.

Most alphabet songs simply give the children alliterative rhymes to sing.

This may help them associate a sound to a letter, but still leaves them with the task of associating the visual symbol with the letter name. Given this problem, these particular songs were designed to push the children to actively notice the shape and form of each letter.



As the children sing, they:

- * act out the shape of the letter with their bodies
- * sing about the shape of the letter with their voices
- * look at the letters with their eyes as the teacher holds it.

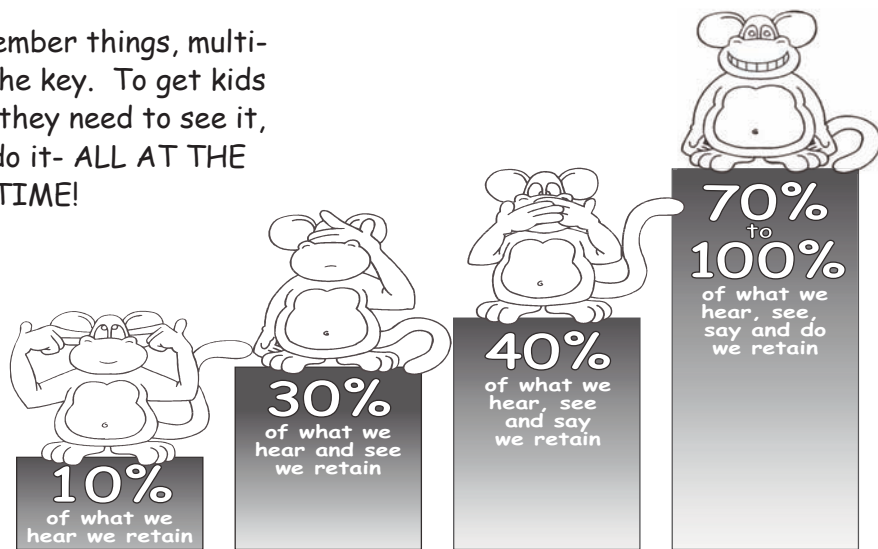


This multisensory "soup" can truly make a difference to many of your most difficult to reach students!

To help children remember things, multisensory lessons are the key. To get kids to remember things, they need to see it, say it, hear it, and do it- ALL AT THE SAME TIME!

Here's why:

If one pathway to the brain is blocked, (as in a learning disability) there are other paths it can take. If one pathway to the brain is blocked, there are other alternatives. The brain has millions of connections, or "wires," shooting out in many directions as we learn. If some of these connections do not work properly, this can result in a learning disability.



Zoo-Phonics is a fast, easy, multisensory way to teach letter sounds, and can be used as a bridge to learning letter names.

Check out Zoo-Phonics.com. There are several different multisensory programs that can help with this, such as Jolly Phonics, and Animated Literacy, Orton-Gillingham, and Picture Me Reading, and Itchy's Alphabet. Some of my songs include Zoo-Phonics motions, so we are going to learn those first.

Keep in mind that you could use any motions for these songs. It's not the specific motions that make a difference, but rather the multisensory mix of the visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and musical elements that matters.

Children must respond physically and verbally each time they see the letter. In time, they start responding the same even though the character is not shown. Usually, in about three weeks, the whole class knows the letter sounds (though not the letter names) and can begin learning to blend sounds.

Zoo-Phonics Motions

(These have probably been updated since Heidi learned them 15 years ago.
For more current information, please visit Zoo-Phonics.com.)

All motions should be done with the sound simultaneously.

- a** Allie Alligator- Make an alligator chomping motion with both hands.
- b** Bubba Bear- Reach up with one hand (as if for honey from a bee hive) and feed yourself honey.
- c** Catina Cat- Put one hand on a cheek and rub it as if you are a cat cleaning itself.
- d** Deedee Deer- Using both hands, hold two fingers up on top of your head and flick the fingers as a deer flicks its ears.
- e** Ellie Elephant- Move one arm in front of you like an elephant's trunk.
- f** Francy Fish- Place one hand out and put the other hand on top of it. Wiggle thumbs and make an up and down swimming motion like a fish.
- g** Gordo Gorilla- Pretend to hold a banana in one hand and peel it with the other.
- h** Honey Horse- Slap your legs and make a horse galloping motion with your feet.
- i** Inny Inchworm- Put one finger up and make it inch along like an inchworm.
- j** Jerry Jellyfish- Using both hands, wiggle fingers and move hands downward as a jellyfish might swim.
- k** Kayo Kangaroo- Make a boxing motion with hands and kick with one foot at the same time.
- l** Lizzy Lizard- Hold hands under your chin with elbows up and sun yourself like a lizard. Cock head to the side.
- m** Missy Mouse- With one hand, pretend to feed yourself cheese like a mouse.
- n** Nigel NightOwl- Put both hands around your eyes as if you are holding binoculars, to remind us of an owl's big eyes.
- o** Ollie Octopus- With both hands, make a swishing motion like an octopus swimming.
- p** PeeWee Penguin- Walk like a penguin with both hands at sides.
- q** Queeny Quail- Put one finger on the forehead and bend it up and down, to remind us of the curly feather on the quail's head.
- r** Robbie Rabbit- With both hands in front of you, hop like a rabbit.
- s** Sammy Snake- With one hand, make a slithering snake motion.
- t** Timothy Tiger- Hold both hands out to the side and pretend to rattle your cage at the zoo, because you want out.
- u** Umber Umbrella Bird- With one hand, pretend to hold an umbrella over head and "fly" with the other hand.
- v** Vincent Vampire Bat- Put both hands on the mouth and make teeth with the index fingers, while elbows "fly."
- w** Willie Weasel- With both hands, lace fingers together and make a rolling motion like a weasel running.
- x** Xavier Fox- With both hands, cross index fingers in the shape of an X and pretend to knit.
- y** Yancy Yak- Form one hand into a sign language Y and hold it like a telephone at the ear.
- z** Zeke Zebra- Place palms together and make a pillow for your head. (The zebra is tired from all that running around.)



Words for Singable Songs for Letters and Sounds

The A Song

(A-Hunting We Will Go)

Oh, the A goes /a/, /a/, /a/
 The A goes /a/, /a/, /a/
 The big A's like a mountain
 With a line across like that!

Oh, the A goes /a/, /a/, /a/
 The A goes /a/, /a/, /a/
 The little A's a circle
 With a stick right after that!
 (repeat from beginning)

The B Song

(Baby Bumble Bee)

A stick and then a bump, bump makes big B!
 Won't my Mommy be so proud of me!
 A stick and then a bump, bump makes big B!
 Oops! It stung me!

A big stick, then a circle makes small B.
 Won't my Mommy be so proud of me!
 A big stick, then a circle makes small B.
 Oops! It stung me!

/b/, /b/, /b/, /b/, /b/, B!
 Won't my Mommy be so proud of me!
 /b/, /b/, /b/, /b/, /b/, B!
 Oops! It stung me!

The C Song

(A Sailor Went to Sea)

To make the letter C, C, C,
 It's half a circle, C, C, C,
 It looks like ears on me, me, me!
 But it's /c/, /c/, /c/, /c/
 /c/, /c/, C, C, C!

(repeat 1 more time slowly,
 then two more times fast!)

The D Song

(Do Lord....."I've got a home in glory
 land...)

I've got a great big tummy like a capital D! D!
 I've got a great big tummy like a capital D! D!
 I've got a great big tummy like a capital D! D!
 D, /d/, /d/, /d/, /d/, D! D!

A circle, a big stick, and that's the little D! D!
 A circle, a big stick, and that's the little D! D!
 A circle, a big stick, and that's the little D! D!

D, /d/, /d/, /d/, /d/, D!

Do you, oh do you, oh do remember D! D!
 Do you, oh do you, oh do remember D! D!
 Do you, oh do you, oh do remember D! D!
 D, /d/, /d/, /d/, /d/, D! D!

The E Song

(Buffalo Gals)

The tricky little letter E, letter E, letter E,
 Goes /e/, /e/, /e/, and E, E, E,
 Dance by the light of the moon!

Make a big stick down and three lines across,
 Three lines across, three lines across,
 Make a big stick down and three lines across,
 That's how to make a big E!

Make a straight line across,
 Circle up and around,
 Up and around, up and around,
 Make a straight line across,
 Circle up and around,
 That's how to make a small E!

The tricky little letter E, letter E, letter E,
 Goes /e/, /e/, /e/, and E, E, E,
 Dance by the light of the moon!

The F Song

(I've Been Working on the Railroad)

One line going down,
 Two across next!
 That is how you make big F, F, F!
 One line going down,
 Two across next!
 That is how you make big F, /f/, /f/!

Candy cane, across for small F!
 Candy cane, across I know!
 Candy cane, across for small F!
 Strumming on the old banjo, and
 singing...

Fee fi, fiddle-e-i-oh!
 Fee fi fiddle-e-i-oh----,
 Fee, fi, fiddle-e-i-oh!
 Strumming on the old banjo, oh, oh!

The G Song

(Lazy Mary)

It's big and round with a line inside
 A line inside, a line inside,

It's big and round with a line inside,
 And that's the great big G!

A circle, stick and a smile below,
 Smile below, smile below,
 A circle, stick and a smile below,
 And that's a little G!

/g/, /g/, /g/, /g/, /g/, /g/, /g/, /g/, G!
 (etc.)

And that's the sound of G!

The H Song

(Hop, Hop, Hop)

/h/, /h/, /h/, /h/...

Hop, hop, hop! Make an H and stop!
 Two big lines and one across!
 Hop around until you're lost!
 Hop, hop, hop! Make an H and stop!

/h/, /h/, /h/, /h/...

Jump, jump, jump! Small H has a bump!
 Start up high and then come down,
 Make a rainbow to the ground!
 Jump, jump, jump! Small H has a bump!

The I Song

(This Old Man)

/i/, /i/, I, /i/, /i/, I!

I is just a big straight line,
 With an extra line on the top and down
 below!

Now it's time to go, go, go!
 (repeat)

/i/, /i/, I, /i/, /i/, I!

Little I is one short line,
 With a tiny dot above it in the sky!
 Now it's time to fly, fly, fly!
 (repeat)

The J Song

(John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt)

Big J has a tail and a hat!

That makes big J!

So when I see a J!

A /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, J,

I think "John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt!"

J, J, J, J, J, J, J, J!

Small J has a tail and a dot!

That makes small J!

So when I see a J!





A /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, J,
I think "John Jacob Jingleheimer Schmidt!"
J, J, J, J, J, J, J, J!

/j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, /j/, J,
(etc....)

I think "John Jacob Jingleheimer
Schmidt!"
J, J, J, J, J, J, J, J!

The K Song
(K, K, K Katie)

/k/, /k/, /k/ Katie!
Make a line down and,
Then go in and then go out
And that's a K,
/k/, /k/, /k/ Katie!

Make a line down and,
Then go in and then go out
And that's a K,
(repeat)

The L Song
(Old Dan Tucker)

The capital L goes down and then,
Turns the corner and there it ends!
The lower case L is one straight line,
I can make an L just fine!

So let's make an L, an easy letter!
L, /l/, /l/, /l/, an easy letter!
L, /l/, /l/, /l/, an easy letter!
Now I know my alpha-better!
(repeat)

The M Song
(Sally the Camel)

Capital M's got- big bumps!
Capital M's got- big bumps!
Capital M's got- big bumps!
And that's letter M! Boom, boom,
boom!

Lower case M's got- small bumps!
First make a line, then- bump, bump!
First make a line, then- bump, bump!
And that's letter M! Boom, boom,
boom!

/m/, /m/, /m/, /m/, /m/- bump, bump!
/m/, /m/, /m/, /m/, /m/- bump, bump!
/m/, /m/, /m/, /m/, /m/- bump, bump!
And that's letter M!
Boom, boom, boom, BOOM!

The N Song
(Twinkle, Twinkle)

Straight line down and hop to the top!
Big slide down and straight back up!
That is how you make big N!
Now let's do it all again!

Straight line down and hop to the top!
Big slide down and straight back up!
/n/, /n/! /n/, /n/,

Little N's a short stick down,
Rainbow up and down to town.
That is how you make small N,
Now let's do it all again!
Little N's a short stick down,
Rainbow up and down to town.

/n/, /n/! /n/, /n/,
/n/, /n/, /n/, /n/,
N, N, N!

No, no, no, no- That's the END!

The O Song

(If All the Snowflakes)

An O is just like a circle or a zero,
Oh, it's so easy for me!
You just make the sound
With your mouth open wide!
/o/, /o/, /o/, /o/!

/o/, /o/, /o/! /o/, /o/, /o/!
An O is just like a circle or a zero,
Oh, it's so easy for me!
(repeat)

The P Song

(Goober Peas)

A stick and then a circle,
And that's a great big P.
A stick and then a circle,
And that's a great big P.
The little P's the same,
But it has to sit down low!

Put it in the mud and,
Then it's time to go!

P, P, P, P,
/p/, /p/, /p/, /p/, P!
Goodness how delicious!
Go and eat your peas!

The Q Song

(Cuckoo)

Q, Q! Q, Q! A circle, slanted stick!
Q, Q! Q, Q! A big karate kick!
(repeat)

Q, Q! Q, Q! A circle, down and
pop!
Q, Q! Q, Q! A big karate chop!
(repeat)

Q, Q! Q, Q!
/q/, /q/, /q/, /q/, /q/, Q! (repeat,
etc.)

The R Song

(Rocka My Soul, "So high, can't get over it...")

Big stick, circle, diagonal!
Big stick, circle, diagonal!
Big stick, circle, diagonal!
The capital R!

Short stick down, back up and a rainbow,
Short stick down, back up and a rainbow,
Short stick down, back up and a rainbow,
The lower case R!

/r/, /r/! That's the sound of it!
(repeat 3 X)
The sound of the R!

The S Song

(The Snake Charmer)

For an S I make,
Just a curvy little snake!
For an S I make,
Just a curvy little snake!
And that /s/, /s/, /s/, snaky
Makes my knees a little shaky!
For an S, I make,
Just a curvy little snake!

The T Song

(For He's A Jolly Good Fellow)

Pull down and cross on the top!
Pull down and cross on the top!
Pull down and cross on the top!
And that's the capital T!

Pull down and cross in the middle!
Pull down and cross in the middle!
Pull down and cross in the middle!
And that's the lower case T!

/t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, T!
/t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, T!
For T's a jolly good letter!
For T's a jolly good letter!
For T's a jolly good letter!
/t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, /t/, T!



The U Song

(Joshua Fought the Battle of Jericho)

It's a smily, smily letter U!
Letter U, letter U!
It's a smily, smily letter U!
It's an /u/, /u/, /u/, /u/, U!

Little U has got a smile and then a stick,
Then a stick, then a stick!
Little U has got a smile and then a stick,
It's an /u/, /u/, /u/, /u/, U!

The V Song

(The Halloween Song)

V goes down and up like teeth upon a bat,
Teeth upon a bat, teeth upon a bat!
V goes down and up like teeth upon a bat,
/v/, /v/, /v/, V! Boo!

Big V is tall, but little V is short,
Little V is short, little v is short!
Big V is tall, but little V is short,
/v/, /v/, /v/, V! Boo!

/v/, /v/, /v/, /v/, /v/, /v/, /v/,
etc.

The W Song

(Father Abraham)

It's a W- a W!
Everybody make a W!
/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/, /w/,
/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/!
And it just looks like this:
First down, then up, then down, then up!

It's a W- a W!
Everybody make a W!
/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/, /w/,
/w/, /w/, /w/, /w/!
And it just looks like this:
First down, then up, then down, then up!
Sit down!

The X Song

(Reuben and Rachel)

"Criss-y cross-y" makes an X!
"Criss-y cross-y" makes an X!
/x/, /x/, kissy!
/x/, /x/, kissy!
"Criss-y cross-y" makes an X!
(repeat)

The Y Song

(Viva la Compagnie)

A V on the top and a line underneath.
Capital Y, Y, Y!
A V on the top and a line underneath.
Capital Y, Y, Y!

/y/, /y/, /y/, /y/, /y/, /y/, /y/,
/y/, /y/, /y/, Y!
(...etc...)
Everyone make a Y!

A V on the top, a diagonal line,
Lower case Y, Y, Y!
A V on the top, a diagonal line,
Lower case Y, Y, Y!
(repeat /y/ sound section)

The Z Song

(Zum Gali Gali)

Make a /z/, /z/, Z everyone!
Make a zig zag line til it's done!
Make a /z/, /z/, Z everyone!
Make a zig zag line til it's done!

Zum, gali gali gali, Zum, gali gali,
Zum, gali gali gali, Zum, gali gali, zoom!
(repeat)

Sounds to Letters

(Original song by Mike Cravens and Heidi Butkus)

Sound, sound, letter. Sound, sound!
Sound, sound, letter! Sound, sound,
letter!

/a/, /a/, A, /a/, /a/
/a/, /a/, A! /a/, /a/, A!

/b/, /b/, B, /b/, /b/
/b/, /b/, B! /b/, /b/, B!

(Continue this pattern through
the entire alphabet...)

/z/, /z/, Z, /z/, /z/
/z/, /z/, Z! /z/, /z/, Z!

Sound, sound, letter. SOUND,
SOUND!

Alphabet Action

(Note: For each letter, first the name of the letter is said twice, then the sound is given three times. Then an action word is sung five times. It is recommended that the teacher show or point to alphabet cards when the letters or sounds are said.)

- A - Ants (stomp on ants)
- B - Boo! (scare someone)
- C - Clap! (clap hands)
- D - Dig! (dig like a dog)
- E - End! (point to your rear end)
- F - Fly! (pretend to fly)
- G - Go! (thumb a ride)
- H - Hop! (hop on one foot)
- I - Itch! (scratch your arm)
- J - Jump! (jump up and down)
- K - Kick! (do a karate kick)
- L - Leap! (leap to the side with one hand up)
- M - Mine! (pretend to grab something)
- N - No! (shake your finger, "No!")
- O - On! (put one hand on the other)
- P - Play! (run and shake hands over head)
- Q - Quack! (flap hands like a duck)
- R - Run! (run in place)
- S - Swim! (pretend to swim)
- T - Twist! (do the twist)
- U - Up! (jump up with hands raised)
- V - Vroom! (pretend to rev a motorcycle)
- W - Work! (hammer something)
- X - X! (draw an X in the air)
- Y - Yak! (talk on telephone)
- Z - Zoom! (zoom around with palms facing)



Favorite Activities for Alphabet Practice

Alphabet Arch Activities

Match plastic letters to a printed alphabet strip. As the child matches them, he must pick it up and feel the letter while saying the letter name aloud. The goal is to match the letters in ABC order as quickly as possible while saying the letter names. Keep the capitals separate from the lower case letters, doing this once for capitals and once for lower case letters.



Letter tiles available for one dollar per set:
<http://www.alphabetletter.com/products.php>

* Reduce the activity for the struggling child by giving him only the letters in his name instead of the whole alphabet.



Use cheap pencil boxes to keep their letters handy. This plastic pencil box was purchased at Staples office supply store in August when all of their school supplies went on sale.

"RAN" Boards (Rapid Automatic Naming Boards) are also a great way to practice just a few words or letters at a time.

D	a	m	i	a	n	D	m
a	n	i	m	n	D	a	n
D	m	a	D	a	i	D	n
i	D	m	a	n	D	a	m
n	i	D	a	m	i	D	m
D	a	D	n	D	m	a	n
a	D	i	m	i	D	a	D
m	i	m	D	a	i	D	m

By adding a table to a Word document, you can make any type of RAN board that you need. This is a great way to practice letters, numbers, words, etc.

(RAN boards can be downloaded at
<http://www.sbceo.org/~retac/RAN.html>)

Unifix Cubes With Letters

Write the letters on unifix cubes. Have the children put them together in alphabetical order. Be sure to separate sets by color.

Letter Writing Practice

When children practice writing the letters, they must focus on the shape of the letter.

- * This helps develop the automaticity that they need in letter recognition.
- * It also helps develop fine motor skills.

For further practice on letters, try having the children build the letter shapes with manipulatives, such as those found in

Handwriting Without Tears.

HWT is a good system to help young children that are struggling with underdeveloped fine motor skills and visual perception difficulties, such as crossing the midline. It is available at: www.hwtears.com.



The basic idea:

1. Children are given blocks shaped like "sticks" and "curves." They use these blocks to form letters.
2. They trace the letters by "polishing" them with a cloth in the direction that the letter is formed.
3. Children build, trace, and rebuild the letters, verbalizing the directions as they go.
4. Children then practice writing the letters on salt trays or paper, etc.

Play Alphabet Bang, Whole Group Style!

Just put some cards with the word, "Bang!" and a cute graphic on them, and mix them in with the other flashcards.

Mix the Bang cards in with the other flash cards in a zip bag. Cover the front card in the bag with a black piece of paper. Pull the cards out one at a time. The kids identify the card when you show it. When you come to a Bang card, then they either sit down or stand up.

Gelboards and Letter Magnets

Children place the letter magnets on the Gelboard, and then erase the letter by tracing it with their finger.

Educlime's Living Letters Book

Here's a great book that helps children remember where to place the letters on lined paper. "Living Letters: A Story About Where Letters Live On The Line"

Tricolor ABC Chart (Also by Educlime)

We have "grass" letters, "sky" letters, and "mud" letters. Have children sort the letters by where they "live" on the lines.

Sky Letters:

b d f h k l t (and all of capitals)

Grass letters

a c e i m n o r s u v w x z

Mud Letters

g j p q y

Tricolor Dry Erase Boards

This board helps train the children to find the correct spot on the line. They sell lined paper that is also colored as well. This method made sense to those children that were originally puzzled by the lined paper that my district requires. They were later able to transition fairly easily to regular lined paper (and seemed pretty happy doing it!)

Modeling Clay Writing

Spread clay or playdough onto a plastic plate. Have the children scratch the letters into the clay with a pencil or stick. This idea also came from "Educlime."

Disappearing Chalkboard Letters

Have the children write letters with chalk, and then wipe the letter off with a slightly damp sponge in the correct drawing order of the letter. This idea also came from "Educlime."

Play "Jump On It"

Write the letters on card stock paper and laminate them, or buy some large plastic alphabet letters. Lay them on the rug in alphabetical order. Call out a letter and have a child jump on that letter, calling out the letter name when he or she lands on it. You can buy blank ones from www.polyenterprises.com. Their "seconds" are about \$1.35 per 9" round diameter "spot."

Playdough Letters

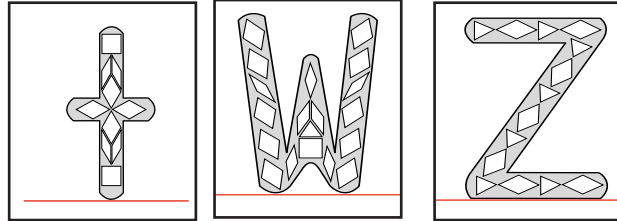
Show the children how to form the letters out of playdough. Have them tell you the name of the letter that they formed. If they cannot tell you, then they need to squish up that letter and make it again. Keep making that same letter until the child can tell you the its name.

Making Letters

This will work with pipe cleaners, Wikki Stix, licorice, yarn, duplo blocks, etc. Substituting various materials to make letters would be a good way to vary one single learning center.

Pattern Blocks Letters

Make letters out of pattern blocks! You can purchase and download the masters at www.heidisongs.com.



"Search and Sort"

Have the children search for letters in magazines and glue them onto one paper for each letter. You can also do the activity by printing out the children's names or the color words, etc., in a large font, stretching out the spaces between the letters if possible for ease of cutting. Have them cut, sort, and glue the letters. Concepts of print can be sorted, too!

Do Letter Searches on Environmental Print

Laminate the fronts of cereal boxes or cracker boxes, etc. and have the kids circle the letters with a wipe off marker.

Incorporate Fine Motor Skills

Put letters on clothespins, and have the children make words out of them or practice putting them in order.

Write Letters in the Sand

Take the kids outside and have them write their letters in the sand. You can color your own sand or salt by stirring colored pieces of chalk into a bowl with salt or sand in it. Salt comes out prettier than sand!

Sing the Alphabet Songs and Write

Listen to the songs, and have the children write the letters on white boards or magnadoodles while the music plays.

Take Advantage of Big Books

Read a big book to the class. After each page, see if a child can find some letters that they know on it.

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Find me on Facebook!



List of Related Citations

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Presented by Heidi Butkus

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