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What resources are available to assist parents of hearing-impaired children to increase their children's reading abilities?

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**What Resources are Available to Assist Parents of Hearing-Impaired Children to
Increase Their Children's Reading Abilities?**

by

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**An independent study submitted in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for the degree of**

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Emphasis in Education of the Hearing Impaired

**Washington University
Department of Speech and Hearing**

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Approved by: Lynda Berkowitz, M.S., Independent Study Advisor

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Introduction to Study

It is a well-known fact that the national reading average of deaf adults is at approximately a fourth grade level (Schirmer, 2000). Results from the first Stanford Achievement Test designed specifically for hearing-impaired children, analyzed by Trybus and Karchmer (as cited in Paul, 1998), showed that the average reading achievement of deaf children was at the fourth grade, fifth month level. Moreover, only 10% of the top performing deaf children that took this test had achieved greater than or equal to an eighth grade reading level.

In their studies, Luetke-Stahlman, 1988a; 1988b; Lane and Baker, 1974; and Geers and Moog, 1989 (as cited in Paul), have shown that some deaf students in Total Communication programs, in Oral programs, and in the mainstream public schools, have achieved reading levels equal to their same-age hearing classmates. This information is encouraging for both teachers and parents of deaf/hard of hearing children. Research indicates that parental involvement positively affects the reading achievement level of hearing children. However, according to Purcell-Gates, L'allier, & Smith, 1995 (as cited in Enz & Searfoss, 1996), many parents lack the knowledge or resources necessary for helping their children increase their literacy skills. Teachers are increasingly acknowledging and encouraging active parental involvement in their children's education (Flood & Lapp, 1995). Teachers of the deaf encourage parental involvement in their education as well.

The purpose of this paper is twofold. First, it makes apparent the importance of parental efforts in the reading achievement attained by their deaf/hard of hearing children. Parents working at home with their deaf/hard of hearing children can reinforce the reading skills their children learn at school. Second, it points to the need for parents to have appropriate tools –

activities, materials, books, references, and other resources – available for their use to work with their children at home.

Literature Review

Home Literacy Environment

Researchers have looked at the home literacy environment (HLE) as an increasingly important contribution to children's emergent literacy and subsequent attainment of reading skills. Burgess, Hecht, & Lonigan, (2002) have recently conducted a longitudinal study of the effects of different types of home literacy environments on literacy skills.

Two of the HLE concepts studied were the active and the passive HLE. The variables affected by the active and the passive HLE were; phonemic awareness, which is the ability to hear the different sounds of spoken language; oral language; knowledge of the names and sounds of letters as they occur visually in print; and word reading skills.

An active home literacy environment is described as one in which parents actively engage their children in activities, such as rhyming and shared reading, that encourage emergent literacy. A passive home literacy environment is described as one in which parents indirectly model literacy and leisure activities such as reading the newspaper and watching television respectively.

At the beginning of the study 115 preschoolers, age 4-5, were given several tests. These included tests of oral language and phonemic awareness, to determine their ability to hear the different sounds of spoken language. The children were also given tests to determine their alliteration, rhyming, and blending skills as well as knowledge of letters.

In addition to testing, information about the home literacy environment was ascertained by parent questionnaires. One category on the questionnaire was shared reading, an activity where the parent and child actively read and discuss a story rather than the parent simply reading while the child remains silent. Total long-term exposure to shared reading has been found to be

a better predictor of reading achievement than shared reading habits reported at the time of a single study (Burgess, 1997, DeBaryshe, 1995; Senechal, LeFevre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996).

Questions about the active HLE included how old the child was when the parents began shared reading and the amount of the child's daily television viewing. Questions about the passive HLE included the number of books read by the parents on a monthly basis, the time that the child observed the parent(s) reading, and the parental daily television viewing hours. Fewer hours of daily television viewing and an earlier age at the onset of shared reading were seen as more desirable (Burgess, et al., 2002).

One year after the study began, the children were tested again in the areas of phonemic awareness, oral language, knowledge of letters, and also word reading. It was concluded that the active and passive home literacy environments each affected the children's emergent literacy. The active HLE, however, contributed to the most growth in phonemic awareness, oral language, letter knowledge, and word reading. Shared reading had a significant effect on the growth of oral language and letter knowledge. The passive HLE had no significant effect on the growth of phonemic awareness or word reading.

In order for parents to help their children increase their reading achievement, parents must actively work on a variety of literacy skills with their children at home. Modeling literacy and leisure skills alone is simply not enough to encourage growth in the literacy skills necessary for reading achievement and success in education.

Parent Involvement

In 1989, Jean Moog and Ann Geers gathered information on deaf teenagers' literacy attainment. They examined which aspects of the teens' lives—ability, background, and environment—helped develop their literacy achievement. The teens, ages 16-17, were all

profoundly deaf, had average intelligence, and had participated in an oral education setting during their pre-K through elementary school years.

Moog and Geers tested the teens' skills in phonics, vocabulary, comprehension, sentence completion, and story retelling. Most, 90%, of the teens had received hearing aids by the time they were two years old, and a majority of these teens had attended parent-infant and special education pre-K programs. All of the testing was done at the Reading Research Camp at Central Institute for the Deaf.

An important note is that most of the parents, over 90%, were actively involved in their teen's education. Parental involvement began with an understanding of the implications of their teen's deafness and progressed through actively helping them use appropriate language, making speech corrections, and helping with academic subjects. These involved parents also indicated that they read to their children and talked to them about what they had watched on TV on a regular basis throughout the teens' school-age years.

A Reading Grade Score was obtained for each teen. When compared to normally hearing peers, half of the teens tested performed below the seventh-grade reading level while the other half performed above the seventh-grade reading level.

The teens also took the reading comprehension subtest of the Stanford achievement test (SAT- Gardner, Rudman, Karlsen, & Merwin, 1982). A portion of the teens, 30%, performed at or above the tenth grade level – which is right at grade level for their age. A majority of the teens also exhibited spelling scores exceeding the tenth grade level.

Interviews to determine oral language proficiency were given to each teen. Many of the teens, 61%, were rated as having both "practical and school proficiency" in their use of oral English language.

The study concludes that profoundly deaf children do have a higher reading potential and that some do achieve grade level skill, comparable, at ages 16-17 years, to their hearing peers. The results also suggest that deaf children, who receive early intervention including amplification, auditory training, oral English language skills and speech training, as well as active involvement from their family, may more closely approximate the reading levels of their hearing peers (Geers & Moog, 1989).

Parent Training

A study conducted by Justice & Ezell, (2000) looked at the effectiveness of parent-child shared reading that emphasized print rather than oral language. The print emphasis was chosen in order to look at the effect of verbal and non-verbal print referencing. Print referencing is pointing out specific information about letters, words, and punctuation.

Each child in the control and experimental groups was given a pre-test literacy assessment. Parents in the experimental group were given training on both verbal and non-verbal print referencing behaviors such as asking questions, commenting, asking specific questions about the print and tracking print as well as pointing to print respectively. The training was given by using the videotape, "Adults reading to young children: Directing focus on written language" (Ezell & Justice, 1998b).

The parents in the control group did not get any training on print referencing behaviors. Both groups were given specific, identical books, blank audiotapes, and a tape recorder for recording the shared reading sessions. Parents in both the control and experimental groups sent in an audiotape of the shared reading sessions at the end of the week for the four-week duration of the study.

Results from the experimental group's audiotapes revealed that parents used verbal print referencing behaviors an average of nine times during a single shared reading session, equating to 97% of the shared reading sessions throughout the whole study. Results from the control group's audiotapes revealed that parents who did not get any training used print referencing behaviors during 3% of the shared reading sessions throughout the whole study. Parents who had received the print referencing behavior training found the shared reading with their children to be more enjoyable (Justice & Ezell, 2000).

A post-test literacy assessment given to the experimental group, whose parents were trained in using print referencing behaviors, showed an increased attainment of segmentation skills and print and word concepts as compared to the control group performance on the same post-test literacy assessment.

It is clear that instruction to parents on how to help their children increase their literacy skills is needed. If parents are given the "tools" of instruction to use, it may help increase their child's literacy attainment and result in a more enjoyable shared reading time – altogether encouraging the cycle of quality parent-child time in shared reading and increased literacy skills for the child.

In addition to print referencing behavior, parents are encouraged to give praise to their child and expand on the child's utterances (Whitehurst et al., 1988 – in Justice & Ezell), which may help develop the child's oral language.

It is suggested that print referencing behavior training to parents of children with language impairments may help in shared reading experiences, but further studies need to be done (Justice & Ezell, 2000).

Lack of Information and Resources

Another study supports the findings of Justice and Ezell, (1998), that parents need instruction to more effectively help increase their children's literacy skills. Heineman-Gosschalk and Webster, (2003) have recently obtained questionnaire results revealing that very few parents of deaf children get any information about how to facilitate shared reading at home with their children. Together, these findings point out the great need for parental training so parents may help their children, hearing or deaf/hard of hearing, increase their literacy skills.

Overall, the research findings reviewed suggest that parental involvement is important to help children increase their literacy skills, however, many parents may not know how they can help their children or what resources to use.

Teacher Questionnaire

Sixty questionnaires were distributed for the purpose of obtaining feedback from teachers of the deaf about what activities they felt were important for parents to do with their deaf children at home to increase their reading skills. Twenty questionnaires each were sent to the following schools in St. Louis Missouri; Central Institute for the Deaf, the Moog Center For Deaf Education, and St. Joseph's School For The Deaf.

In all, 19 questionnaires were returned. The types of questions asked included: what parents can do with their deaf children to help them get ready to learn how to read; to listen and to identify sounds of the English language; to learn phonics skills; increase vocabulary; to learn syllables and affixes; and to increase reading comprehension. Teachers suggested activities for all of the areas of the questionnaire. The majority of the teachers indicated that their top priority for parents is to read aloud daily to their children at home.

Teachers also suggested: turning off the TV, modeling reading for pleasure and predicting events, pointing out environmental print, reading nursery rhymes and singing songs, providing children with a lot of colorfully illustrated books, visiting the library regularly, discussing books with their children, expanding vocabulary by giving children alternative words for the same meaning, and asking wh- questions—who, what, where, why, and how.

Teacher Questionnaire Distributed

Research shows that parents who read to their children provide one of the most effective ways to increase reading achievement. There are many other activities that parents can do at home with their children that also benefit reading achievement. The following questions address this issue.

Emergent Literacy

Prioritize (1-6) the following components of emergent literacy that parents can do with their pre-school age children at home to help foster reading readiness?

- _____ read to their children at home daily
- _____ help their child identify sounds in words
- _____ show children print and identify the letter names and sounds
- _____ recite songs and rhymes, identifying rhyming words
- _____ label common items that the child sees daily with printed cards; i.e., the walls, bathroom doors, doors, sink, kitchen, living room, bedrooms, furniture in bedrooms, laundry room, washer, dryer, garage and other home areas
- _____ have the children perform household tasks with parents and discuss what they are doing

For the first priority you indicated, please list 2 or more specific activities you would suggest to parents to do at home with their child.

Phonemic Awareness

Do you use a specific curriculum or resource for teaching phonemic awareness skills in your classroom?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please list:

List 2 or more specific activities you would like parents to do at home with their child to help them develop phonemic awareness skills:

Phonics

Do you use a specific curriculum or resource for teaching phonics skills in your classroom?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please list:

Prioritize (1-3) the following activities that parents could do at home with their child at home to increase their phonics skills:

_____ have child read aloud from any book to parents while parent helps child “sound out” difficult words

_____ practice “word family” activities (onset/rime)

_____ have child read aloud from specific books that reinforce vowel patterns

Vocabulary

How would you prioritize (1-4) the following ways to increase listening and oral vocabulary that parents can do with their child at home?

_____ build experiential background by taking “field trips” to the backyard, parks, nature reserves, the grocery store, and other places to gain new experiences and talking about these experiences

_____ tie new words to the child’s prior knowledge as they occur naturally in everyday situations

_____ have parents help with assigned homework dealing with specific new vocabulary (definitions, spelling, writing sentences)

_____ ask parents to choose one new word each week to teach/reinforce (either of parents’ choosing or as directed by teacher)

For the first priority you indicated, please list 2 or more specific activities you would suggest to parents to do at home with their child.

Structural Analysis

Prioritize (1-3) the following activities that parents could do at home with their child to help increase their structural analysis skills:

_____ help their child with homework that reinforces specific structural analysis cues taught at school

_____ have parent read aloud and ask child to point out prefixes, suffixes, and syllables

_____ have child read aloud to parent and direct parent to help with unknown words using structural analysis (prefixes, suffixes, root words, syllables)

If you were to give specific homework for structural analysis, please list 2 or more specific activities that you might assign.

Do you use any specific resources to teach/practice structural analysis skills?

_____ Yes _____ No

If yes, please list:

Comprehension

Prioritize (1-3) the following things that you would suggest parents do with their child at home to increase their comprehension skills:

_____ ask parents to have child read and parents ask questions about the text

_____ have the child read, then summarize to the parents

_____ assign specific reading with specific questions and ask parents to assist with this homework

If you give specific homework to help students practice reading for good comprehension, list the types of questions you would ask:

Please describe any other activities that you would like parents to do at home with their child that you feel would increase reading achievement.

Rationale for Study

Research findings suggest that parental involvement is very important to help children increase their literacy skills. However, research also shows that parents may not know how they can help their children at home or what resources to use. For this reason, I have compiled a manual of activities from the suggestions of teachers of the deaf on the questionnaires, my own readings and experiences, and activities I have observed in use. This manual also includes references and resources such as books and websites. The activities in the manual are meant to be fun activities that parents can do with their deaf children at home, as a supplement to the reading instruction children receive at school.

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How to Help Your
Hearing-Impaired
Child Increase His
Reading Skills

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Introduction to Parents

Teachers of the deaf responded to a questionnaire that the most important thing parents can do to help increase their hearing-impaired children's literacy is to read to them every day.

Studies have shown that children whose parents read to them daily attain reading skills more easily and at a higher level than if their parents did not read to them. Clearly, parental involvement and support make a difference in children's achievement levels even with children of varying potential. These results may apply to hearing-impaired children as well.

Hearing-impaired children who receive early intervention and auditory training also need the support from parents to learn beginning reading skills that will lead to higher academic achievement. Without such parental involvement, the hearing-impaired child may not reach his/her true reading and academic potential. Parents can work at home with hearing-impaired children of any age to foster and develop reading skills.

Parental efforts, combined with special instruction received by children at school, should have a positive affect on the children's reading skills and overall academic achievement.

Parents can be empowered to help their children if they are shown how and given resources. This manual was written as an initial resource for parents who want to work with their children at home. Contents include activities, resources, and informational websites.

This manual contains different categories, each targeting certain reading skills. The skills categories are defined at the beginning of each section.

Activities

Emergent Literacy/Pre- Reading

Emergent Literacy or pre-reading skills begin in toddlerhood. These skills include letter concepts, letter-sound relationships, book reading behaviors, and a love of books. The following activities listed are good to do during this stage. Most important—read to your child daily.

Picture story

Give your child paper and crayons. Tell him to draw a picture story. If he wants to talk while drawing, encourage him to do so. If he wants to draw silently at first, let him draw the picture, then ask him to tell you a story about the picture. Instead of asking "What is that?," point to part of the picture and say, "Tell me about that part of your picture." If he tells you, "That is a soft cat," you may expose him to another word describing the cat such as, "That is a soft cat; a soft, furry, cat." He may not begin to use the new word furry, but at least he has heard it. You may wish to have your child tell you about the picture again the next day. He may or may not use the new word, but it will be another chance for you to say it for him to hear. Continue to give new describing words whenever your child tells you a picture story. Eventually, he may begin using the new describing words.

Take A Listening Walk

Take your child for a walk. Draw to your child's attention the sounds that you hear and talk about them. This is a practical activity as it helps your child learn environmental sounds and to converse about what he hears. If he can converse about what he hears environmentally, he will have a better understanding of its meaning and importance. Time permitting, once home, ask him to tell you a sound he heard. He may imitate the sound if he does not have a name for it. Give him the name of the sound source. "Yes, you heard (bark); a (dog) makes that sound."

Foamy Letters

Arrange soft, foamy, magnetic letters on the refrigerator so that they are at the child's eye level. Point to a letter, name it, and make the letter sound. Have your child repeat after you. Once he understands what to do, tell him it is his turn. If he points to a letter he does not know, name it for him and make the sound. Have him try to repeat. You may want to separate vowels and consonants depending on how your child's teacher is introducing them at school. Have the child identify any letters he knows and those that have been introduced at school. The child may recognize letters that have not been introduced because they occur in his name or friends' names. Names are a good place to start for letter recognition. As your child learns, you may encourage him to spell his name and his friends' names. Add to the list names of family members and pets if any.

Dough Letters

Show your child how to roll dough to make thin strings. Arrange the strings to make letters. Talk about the letters. Name them and make their sounds. Help your child spell her name with the dough letters. Encourage her to spell her name again and friends' names. This activity uses the auditory, visual, and tactile modes of learning.

Act It Out

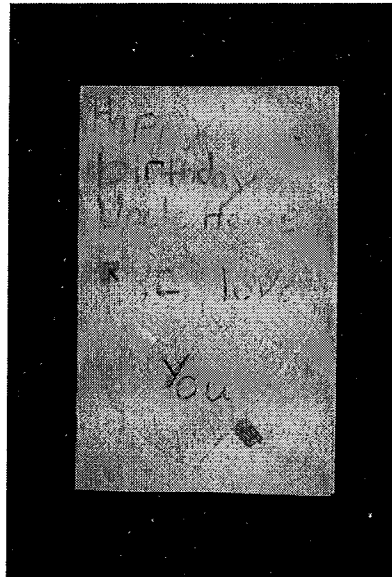
Act out a favorite story with your child, then while holding the book, sit down next to her and have her "read" to you from the book. She may tell the story in her own words when she is first beginning to read. With repeated acting and reading, she may progress from acting and reading the pictures to reading to you straight from the text. Acting may help the child remember what happened in what order in the story. This sequencing is important in order for her to learn how to predict what may happen next in a story. Sequencing and predicting are important skills that help with comprehension.

Scrapbook

Help your child start a scrapbook. Use the child's drawings, photographs, birthday cards, and other things that are special to the child. Help your child write on labels for the items in the scrapbook. Ask your child to tell you about the items that she wants to put in the scrapbook. Encourage conversation about each item and guide her to write more than just labels. Afterwards, discuss the entire page she has made and ask her what she thinks she will add next time. This will encourage more thoughts and more speaking to express her thoughts.

Card Writing

Suggest to your child that she write a card to someone special. Have paper and crayons or markers available. Ask her who she wants to write to and what she wants to write. It is important for her to verbally tell you what she wants to say, before she writes. She may want to only draw a picture and tell you what to write. If she wants to write, help her with spelling if she asks. When she is finished, discuss her drawing and writing with her. Show her how to look up the correct address, and have her read the address to you if she can. Address an envelope and send the card. It is important to follow through and mail the card. This makes evident the idea that writing conveys her spoken words. She will learn that correspondence is one of many ways to communicate. The special someone may even write back to her.

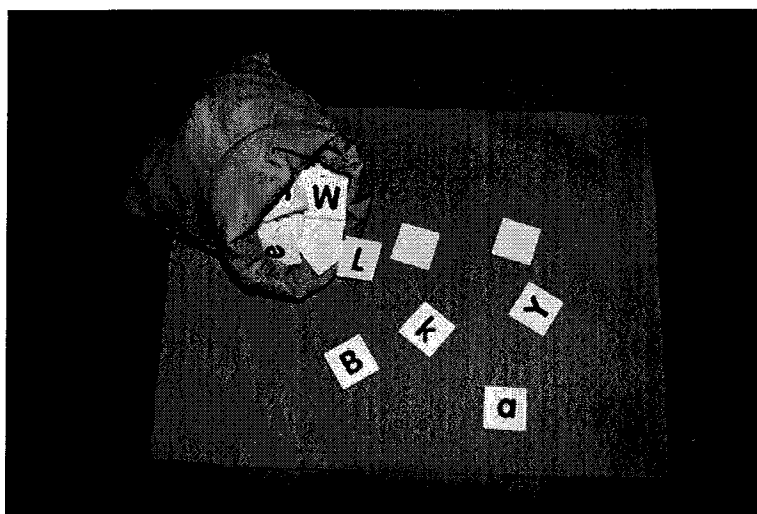


Phonics

Phonics is the symbol-sound relationship between a printed letter and the sound it represents. The following activities listed may help your child with learning phonics. Read to your child.

Name That Letter

Tell your child you are going to play a game. Put plastic letter tiles into a bag. Shake the bag and have her select three to five tiles from the bag. You may need to point to the letters and name them until she understands the game. Ask her to point to and name each letter. Your child may know the letter name, but not know how to tell you immediately. Give her a few seconds to look at the letters and think. Then, if she needs help, first give her a hint by asking what letter sounds like 'm,' or whichever letter happens to be on the tile. If she cannot tell you, give her the letter name with its sound ask her to say it back to you. As she names the letters and makes their sounds, she may then toss them back into the bag.



Dough Etching

Place flattened dough in a shallow cookie sheet. Show child how to hold sheet steady on their lap or the table, and how to 'etch' his name into the dough using a blunt pencil. Make sure to use a cookie sheet you don't mind getting scratched if the child pushes the pencil too hard and it goes through the dough.

Rice Writing

Put enough rice in a 9"x 13" pan to cover the bottom. Put paper on the table. Place the pan on top of paper so if rice spills out it can be cleaned up easily. Show your child how to write letters in the rice with your finger while saying the letter names. Have the child imitate you. Comment on the child's effort and tell her it is her turn. This activity reinforces letter writing while developing eye-hand coordination.

Label It

Take index cards or paper strips and a marker to label things around the house. Walk over to an item and name it. Next, let your child watch you as you print the words. Say each letter aloud as you print, and then say the entire word. Have the child repeat the word and allow her to tape the label to the item. Use removable tape. Good items to label are doors, walls, closets, refrigerator, table, chairs, desks, bookshelves, and furniture. If you are in doubt about using tape on furniture, don't label it, but do make it a point to verbally identify those items so your child may learn their names too.

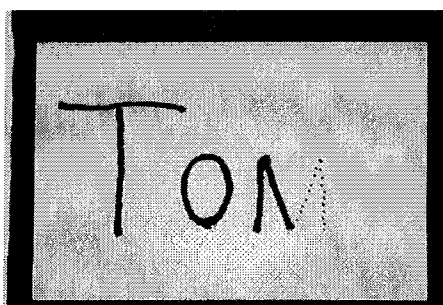
Coaster Covers

Write uppercase or lowercase alphabet letters on Post-It notes. Make two notes of each letter and stick them on the backs of plastic coasters. Place the coasters beside a cup. Tell your child you are thirsty and must fill the cup with letter matches before you can get a drink of water, juice, or soda. When he gets a match, let him peel the sticky note off the back of the coaster and put it in the cup. Keep playing until he has found each letter match and filled the cup. Praise him for a job well done and enjoy a drink of his favorite juice or soda with him! The picture shows different upper and lowercase letters only for demonstration of how to set up the game. It is a good idea to use only upper or lowercase letters until your child can identify both. You then may want to give him a challenge by having him match an uppercase letter with its lowercase form. For an advanced challenge, use several sets of coasters.



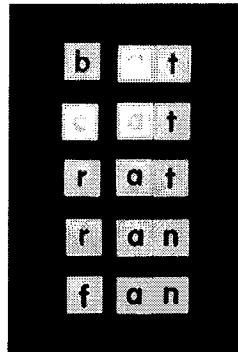
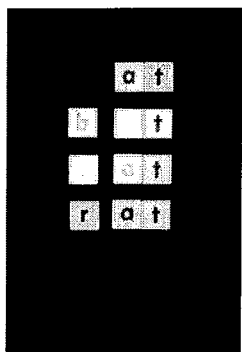
Yarn Writing

Have your child select a piece of construction paper and yarn color. "Print" his name in a dotted outline on the paper with a marker. Discuss the letters as you are writing them. Model for him writing with your finger over the dotted outline while you say the letter names. Now have him "write" with his finger over the dotted outline. Cut yarn in lengths needed for each letter. Use a glue stick and help your child "write" with the glue over each dotted outline. Help him put the yarn lengths on the dotted outline to make the letters. Talk about each letter as you are helping him. If he insists on doing the gluing and placing the yarn over the outline for himself, let him do so. He is still developing fine motor control over his muscles and this activity will help that development. The end goal is not perfection; it is learning while having fun together. Talk about his work and give him acknowledgement such as "You wrote your name 'T' 'o' 'm', Tom. That is how your name looks in writing." Hang up his work in a special place, his bedroom or the kitchen refrigerator, so the he may look at it again.



First and Last Letters

This activity is like the beginning and ending sounds activity, but with the written letter represented in a concrete item such as tiles or homemade paper letter squares. Letters in this activity are seen and heard. Choose several words with the same endings, i.e. 'bat, cat, and rat.' Tell the child that you are going to play a game and make words. First place the endings 'at' in a column as in the photo. Ask the child tell you how to say the word ending. If she does not know how, say it and have her repeat after you. Put the first letter in front of the 'at' and say the letter name, 'B', then the first letter sound 'b,' and the word ending sound, 'at,' then the whole word, 'bat.' Have the child repeat making the word 'bat.' Have the child to find the letter 'C' and place it in front of the 'at' in next row. Ask her what the letter sounds like. She should make the sound 'k.' Point to the 'at' and ask her to say the sounds. She should tell you 'at.' Once she has the beginning sound and the word ending, have her blend the sounds together to say the word 'cat.' Continue to ask her to find another beginning sound and make as many real words as possible. This should be like a game to the child.



Phonemic Awareness/Listening for Sounds in Words

Phonemic awareness is the ability to hear and discriminate the sounds of a language. Some phonemic awareness skills include: listening for the individual sounds that make up a word, blending sounds to form words, and changing sounds to make a new word. The following activities listed are good for developing phonemic awareness. Don't forget, read to your child.

Beginning and Ending Sounds of the English Language

Choose three-letter words that differ only in the first sound i.e. bat, cat, fat, hat. Place a piece of felt on a table. Put several stacks of felt squares of contrasting colors beside the larger piece of felt. Place a red square on the felt and make the sound 'b.' Second, lay the yellow square down and make the sound 'a,' then lay down the blue square and make the sound 't;' see figure 1. Guide your child in pointing to each square while again making the sounds they represent. Then, help her blend the word together. Tell her that it is her turn and have her point to the squares, make the sounds they represent, and blend the word together. Next, tell her to listen to you as you change the beginning letter sound to make a new word, See figure 2. Remove the red felt square and replace it with a blue square representing the new sound. In this example, the 'b' could be replaced with a 'k' sound to make the new word 'cat.' Once your child understands that replacing a square represents a new sound, have her replace the felt color square when she hears you say a new sound. She may use any color as long as the correct square is replaced. This activity may also be done by replacing the last sound, See figure 3. For example the 't' sound in 'cat' could be replaced with the 'n' sound to make 'can.'

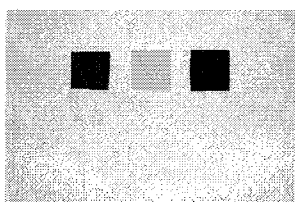


Figure 1
First Word

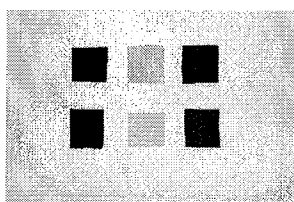


Figure 2
New Beginning Sound

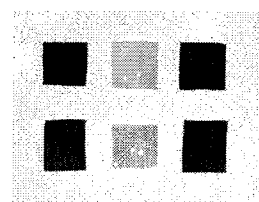


Figure 3
New Ending Sound

Listening to Word Sounds

Tell your child that you are going to play a listening game. Be sure that you have your child's full attention. Make a letter sound and have the child repeat it. Give several sounds and have your child repeat them before moving on to words. Once you advance to words, use the same sounds that the child has correctly identified and made. For example, if you use the sounds, 'g,' 'd,' and 'o,' you could then use them to make the word dog. Get child's full attention again. Say the sounds 'd,' 'o,' and 'g,' separated by a slight pause for the child to hear each sound, then blend the word together without pausing between letter sounds.

Around The House

This may be a good activity for listening when your child is too energetic to sit still. Use that energy productively. Walk around the house and point out items, then sound them out - the family cat, a pan in the kitchen, a coat in the closet, a pen on the desk, a ball or car in the toy chest. Any concrete item can be sounded out. Stick to concrete items though and not abstract things. You could point out the cat and say, "Oh, listen to the sounds in cat, 'c,' 'a,' 't,' 'cat.'" Have the child repeat after you. Tell the child it is her turn. If you are not as energetic as your child is, set a limit before your walk. Look at and sound out fewer items or set a timer. Tell her ahead of time that you have set a timer, or that you are going to sound out a set number of items. She will not be surprised then when time is up.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary refers to all the words a person understands and uses. The following activities listed are good to help increase vocabulary. Remember, read to your child.

Make A grocery List

Make a pretend grocery list of your child's favorite foods. Ask him "What should we write on the list?" Write down what the child tells you. If the child walks over to the shelf and picks an item up, but does not know the name, tell him the name several times. For example, "Oh, you want (item name), those are (item name). I will write (item name) on the list." Make sure he watches you write the items on the list. Read the list with him, then, when the list is complete, go "shopping" in your kitchen to find the items. Include the child in helping you write your real grocery lists too. He will understand that the fun he has pretending to make a list applies to the real world.

Invitations and Guest List

Have a pretend birthday party. Give the child paper and pencil. Ask her who she wants to invite. Repeat the names, then help her spell them. Provide paper for her to write invitations. You may need to make an outline for her and let her fill in the names and date. For an older child, you may want her to plan more details of a party. Show her an outline plan that includes who to invite, what type of food to buy, how much food to buy, and how much time the party will last. Guide her as when needed as she plans her party. Discuss her plan and make sure she understands it.

What's In A Word?

Choose a word that your child knows how to say and knows its meaning. Write the word at the top of a piece of paper. The goal of this activity is to find as many words as possible within the given word. Letters may be used only as many times as they appear in the larger word. For example, if the larger word has two 't's in it the new words could have more than two 't's each. For example the following words could be made from the word strengthen: strength, street, rent, ten, hen, get, then, net, nest, rest, and there. This activity will encourage analytical thinking and spelling.

Rhyming Words

Tell your child you are going to play a game where he must say a word that rhymes with the word you say. Have him come up with as many rhyming words as possible. Help him write the words down so he may look at them later. Tell him it is his turn to say the first word. Write down the word he says, and then tell him the words you come up with that rhyme. Help him write the words down so he may look at them later.

Is That A Real Word?

Use a small notepad for this activity. Set up a point value for a real word and the goal of a certain amount of points to earn something important to your child - a new pencil, a certain snack for school, or an ice cream on the weekend. Make sure these are realistic goals for your child's age and ability level. You may have to give your child real words at the younger age and ability levels to help them begin learning how to use a dictionary. This should be fun, not school. Have your child tell you a word whether it is a silly word or one she heard and remembers, but does not know the definition. Repeat the word verbally to her. Have her repeat it back to you. Print the letters of the word or have her do so if she can. Show her how to look for the word in the dictionary. If the word is a real one, read the definition to her and write it down. Dictionaries are available for all age groups. It may be a good idea to have a few different dictionaries at home.

Eat Your Words!

Make cookie dough that can be rolled and cut. Roll out dough and show your child how to carve the letters of new words he has learned. Use a plastic knife to carve in the dough. Talk about the words and their letters, make the letter sounds, and blend the words. Also encourage him to identify certain letters and words in the recipe. Cut the letters out and cook according to your dough recipe. Arrange the letters to make the new vocabulary words. Enjoy eating your words!

Create A Poem

Make up a poem with your child. Say the first phrase or short sentence that you know has a word that can rhyme. Write it down for him to see. Tell him it is his turn to make up a line that has a rhyming word in it. Give him time to think. If he needs help, you could give a hint about several words that he could use. Keep the poem short enough for him to be successful. This may mean providing the first line, helping him come up with the second line, and providing the last line. Creating poems should become easier as he gains more vocabulary words and gets better at expressing himself.

Comprehension

Comprehension is the understanding of what is read. It is the goal of reading. If you don't understand what you read, you're not really reading! The following activities listed are good to help build comprehension. The number 1 activity: read to your child.

Tile Messages

Show your child how to spell words using plastic tiles. If she is able to spell her name, use it in a small sentence. Once she can decode small sentences, she may begin to make them up by herself. Leave a message for her daily. Select a time when you can give her a few minutes of your undivided attention to talk about the message. She may want to pick up the tiles and try to give you a return message. Encourage her efforts and help her when needed. Tell her that tomorrow you will respond to her new message. This activity will help your child understand that messages are a way of conveying thoughts, and will help increase her motivation to read the next message. She may surprise you as she becomes more comfortable with reading and spelling by leaving the sweetest message a parent can get. She might spell things by how they sound instead of the proper English spelling. This is called invented spelling and is normal for children to do this as they are learning. She will see the correct spellings modeled in your messages.



Tell Me About It

Read a story with your child. Elaborate on the story, the text, and what your child thinks will happen next. After reading the story, have your child tell you in her own words what the story was about. Ask open-ended questions such as, "Will you tell me about the girl?" instead of just yes/no questions. Your child's retelling will give you an idea of how much she comprehends when you read with her.

Ask questions about the story, the characters, the problem in the story, how the characters go about solving the problem, and how the story ended.

You may help your child with listening comprehension by telling her to listen carefully to your story. Tell her a story without a book. Make sure you remember the details. Ask your child about certain details. This skill strengthens auditory memory, which is important for comprehension. Ask your child about details. As she gains better comprehension, you may ask for more details and make your stories more challenging.

Resources

Books and Magazines

Clark, S., & Klimchuck, D. (1998). *Edugames*. Grand Rapids, MI: Instructional Fair, TS Denison. This book includes sixty games, twenty-four of which are skill specific in language arts and school readiness.

Gee, R., & Meredith, S. (1987, 1993). *Entertaining and Educating your Preschool Child*. London: Usborne Publishing Ltd. This book is written in two parts, each contains various activities you can do with your child. The first part gives activities to do with your child during ages birth through two-and-a-half years old. The second part gives activities to do with your child during ages two-and-a-half years old through five years old. Activities and materials are suggested for each stage of development. A guide to developmental stages is included.

Gibson, R. (1993). *You And Your Child: Reading Games: Lots of play ideas for young children*. London: Usborne Publishing Ltd. Hands-on learning is encouraged in this book, which includes an alphabet fishing game, word matching game, bingo, and other literacy craft activities.

Graves, R. (Ed.), (1987). *The RIF Guide To Encouraging Young Readers: A fun-filled activity book for parents and kids*. Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company Inc. This book has over 250 pages of literacy activities and a list of suggested books for ages birth through eleven years old.

Gunning, T., (2000). *Best Books for Building Literacy for Elementary School Children*. Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon. This book has list of books suggested for children of elementary school age.

Hamilton, L. (1999). *Child's Play: Easy Art for Preschoolers*. Contemporary Books. This book has many fun art activities, some of which are listening, drawing to music, identifying colors, making soap prints, making rainbow crayons, and making a simple cardboard desk.

HiP Magazine. Berkeley, California: HiP Publishing Group. A fun, colorful youth magazine in a newspaper format.

Kelly, K., & Zeman, A., (1994). *First Grade Basics: Build the Foundation for Your Child's Success in First Grade*. New York: Black Dog & Leventhal Publishers. Chapters one and two of this book have language arts activities to help build the following skill areas: phonics, rhyme, word recognition, comprehension, parts of speech, proper names, and descriptions.

Miller, J., Rainford, J., & Davidson, J. (1994). *The Jumbo Sticker Fun Book: Lively Activities for Young Children With Over 400 Fabulous Re-usable Stickers*. New York: Hermes House. This fun book brightly colored pictures and word labels. Many of the pages have spaces where your child must read and find the appropriate sticker to fill the spaces.

Moore, H., & Faulk, D. (1994). *KinderUnits*, Revised. Frank Schaffer Publications. This book may be purchased at a school supply store. Even though it is written for teachers with a full school-year outline, many of the activities may be done with you child at home.

Odyssey. Washington D.C.: Laurent Clerc National Deaf Education Center. Articles about deaf education.

Simon, S. (1989, 1996). *101 Ways to Develop Your Child's Thinking Skills and Creativity*. RGA Publishing Group. Categories under which the activities in this book are written are logic and classification, reading and language arts, math, science and social studies, motor development and self-awareness, and art and creativity.

Volta Voices. Washington D.C.: Alexander Graham Bell Association for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing. Articles about devices, families with hearing-impaired children, research and technology, and a parent section.

Websites

Websites

<http://www.babyhearing.org/LanguageLearning/ReadWithMe/index.asp>. This site gives information to parents about early reading with their child who has a hearing loss.

<http://www.readyforlearning.net>. This site is very informative with many "Links to Early Literacy For Families And Providers."

<http://clerccenter.gallaudet.edu>. This site has a lot of information. To access the reading information, go to search and enter the word 'reading.' Many documents about reading will show on the screen so you may browse and learn

<http://www.nclb.gov/parents>. This No Child Left Behind site has information on reading. Click on 'parents' to get parent tips on reading.

<http://www.ed.gov/inits/americanreads/>. This site gives access to many activities for children and includes an online book review.

<http://www.learninghorizons.com>. Learning Horizons products are made by the American Greetings Corporation. The website has a parent's page, products in the range of Pre-K to grade six, free downloadable workbook pages, and a kids corner among other things.

<http://timberdoodle.com>. This URL leads to the Timberdoodle Company website. The site contains many products for home schooling. Click "Services" to get contact information and request a catalog. A few items of interest are 1) Preschool workbook sets with color, cut, trace, match, and "alike or different" activities. 2) "Teach Your Child To Read in 100 Easy Lessons," a book that has lessons for a parent to work with a child. The book uses visual clues during the first eighty lessons, then clues are eliminated as the child learns to read. Lessons are written for different learning styles and to take about twenty minutes to work with your child. 3) "Wrap Ups" Pre-K/K are key shaped boards with letters or numbers on them. They are useful for hand-eye coordination and some include print concepts of left to right and alphabet letter sequencing. The child can begin with a question on the left side of the board and wrap the string through a groove corresponding to the answer on the right side of the board. The child then wraps the string through another groove on the left side of the board for the next question. When the child gets the right answer, the string follows and covers a pattern on the back of the board. This pattern allows the child to check his own work. 4) "Mini Word Spin" game has eight magnetic discs with letters. Each magnet may be separated from the others. Turn the discs to make eight-letter or shorter words. Consonants have point values. The winner is the one who gets the most points for their words. 5) "Lauri A-Z Capitals," and "Lauri a to z lowercase" foam rubber textured puzzles. Take out a letter to reveal a picture. The picture clue helps children associate a letter to a concrete object.

<http://www.agbell.org>. Type 'oral deaf' under the Search AG Bell heading and information will show up about many states' oral schools.

Children's Book List
Recommended Read-alouds, Alphabet books,
Rhyming books, and Alliterative books for
reinforcing beginning consonants
Taken directly from
Creating Reading Instruction for All Children,
3rd edition, by Thomas Gunning

Children's Book List
Recommended read-alouds

Angelou, M. *My Painted House, My Friendly Chicken, and Me*. New York: Clarkson N. Potter. (1994). An eight-year-old Ndebele girl tells about life in her village in South Africa.

Barnes-Murphy, F. *The Fables of Aesop*. New York: Lothrop. (1994). A collection of fables retold from Aesop, including "The Hare and the Tortoise" and "The Ant and the Grasshopper."

Brett, J. *Town Mouse, Country Mouse*. New York: Putnam. (1994). A lovely retelling of the classic fable. After trading houses, the country mouse and the town mouse discover there is no place like home.

Brown, M. *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. New York: Harcourt. (1957). The troll meets his match when he threatens the third goat.

Canon, J. *Stellaluna*. San Diego: Harcourt. (1993). After she falls headfirst into a bird's nest, a baby bat is raised like a bird until she is reunited with her mother.

Curtis, G. *Grandma's Baseball*. New York: Crown. (1990). Having Grandma around is not much fun until her grandson discovers an autographed baseball from Grandpa's days with the Monarchs.

dePaola, T. *Favorite Nursery Tales*. New York: Putnam. (1986). Presented in this attractive book are thirty well-known traditional tales and poems by the Brothers Grimm, Hans Christian Andersen, Aesop, Robert Louis Stevenson, and others.

dePaola, T. *Strega Nona*. New York: Simon & Schuster. (1975). When Strega Nona leaves him alone with her magic pasta pot, Big Anthony is determined to show the townspeople how it works.

Dorros, A. *Abuela*. New York: Dutton. (1991). While riding on a bus with her grandmother, a little girl imagines that they are carried up into the sky and fly over the sights of New York City.

Eastman, P. D. *Are You My Mother?* New York: Random House. (1960). After falling out of its nest, a small bird searches for its mother.

Fox, M. *Koala Lou*. San Diego: Harcourt. (1988). A young koala, longing to hear her mother speak lovingly to her as she did before her siblings came along, plans to win her mother's attention.

Greenfield, E. *Honey, I Love*. New York: Harper. (1978, 1995). Young girl tells about the many things in her life that she loves.

Hoban, R. *Bedtime for Frances*. New York: Harper. (1960). Frances uses a variety of delaying tactics to put off bedtime.

Hong, L. *Two of Everything*. New York: Whitman. (1993). A poor Chinese farmer finds a magic brass pot that doubles whatever is placed inside it, but his efforts to make himself wealthy lead to unexpected complications.

Howard, E. *Aunt Flossie's Hats (and Crab Cakes Later)*. New York: Clarion. (1990). Two girls share tea, cookies, crab cakes, and stories about the past when they visit their favorite aunt.

James, S. *Dear Mr. Blueberry*. New York: Macmillan. (1991). A young girl and her teacher correspond about the whale she has discovered in her pond.

Keats, E. J. *The Snowy Day*. New York: Viking. (1962). A small boy has fun in the snow.

Krauss, R. *The Carrot Seed*. New York: Harper. (1945). After the little boy plants a carrot seed, everyone predicts that it will not come up. The little boy's faith is rewarded with a giant carrot.

Martin, B., Jr. *Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See?* New York: Holt. (1983). A brown bear, blue horse, purple cat, and other creatures are asked what they see in this easy-to-read text.

McCloskey, R. *Make Way for Ducklings*. New York: Viking. (1941). With the assistance of a kindly police officer who halts traffic so that they may safely cross the street, a mother duck and her brood waddle from the Charles River to the pond in Boston's Public Garden.

McPhail, D. *Pigs Aplenty, Pigs Galore!* New York: Dutton. (1993). Pigs galore invade a house and have a wonderful party.

Numeroff, L. *If You Give a Mouse a Cookie*. New York: Harper. (1985). This funny book comes full cycle and takes the reader through a young child's day along the way.

Zion, G. *Harry the Dirty Dog*. New York: Harper. (1956). Sick of baths, Harry buries the hated bath brush and takes off. However, he gets so dirty that his family fails to recognize him when he returns.



Children's Book List

Alphabet books

Aylesworth, J. *Old Black Fly*. New York: Holt (1991). Rhyming text follows a mischievous black fly through the alphabet as he has a very busy day landing where he should not be.

Ehlert, L. *Eating the Alphabet*. New York: Harcourt (1989). Drawings of foods beginning with letter being presented are labeled with their names in both upper- and lower-case letters.

Greenfield, E. *Aaron and Gayle's Alphabet Book*. New York: Black Butterfly Children's Books (1993). Alphabet letters are used as part of a key word within the context of a whole sentence.

Hoban, T. *A, B, See!* New York: Greenwillow (1982). Upper-case letters are accompanied by objects in silhouette that begin with the letter that is shown.

King-Smith, D. *Alphabeasts*. New York: Macmillan (1992). A poetic look is taken at unusual animals through the alphabet, from the anaconda to the zambia.

Mullins, P. *V for Vanishing: An Alphabet of Endangered Animals*. New York: HarperCollins (1994). Endangered and extinct animals from around the world are featured.

Musgrove, M. *Ashanti to Zulu*. New York: Dial (1976). This Caldecott winner gives information about African tribes as it presents the alphabet.

Scarry, R. *Richard Scarry's Find Your ABC*. New York: Random (1973). Each letter is illustrated with numerous objects and creatures whose names contain the letter. Names of the objects are placed nearby with the target letter printed in red, except for two letters, one capital and one lower case, that are printed in black. Readers are urged to find the black letters.

Shirley, G. C. *A Is for Animals*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc. (1991). Illustrations and information are provided about animals whose names begin with the target letter.

Wildsmith, B. *Brian Wildsmith's ABC*. New York: Watts (1963). Upper- and lower-case letters are illustrated with colorful drawings of things whose names begin with each letter.



Children's Book List
Rhyming books

Aylesworth, J. *One Crow, a Counting Rhyme*. Philadelphia: Lippincott (1988). The numbers 0 through 10 are presented through rhyming verses. The first series of eleven verses describes summer scenes. The second series depicts winter scenes.

Cameron, P. "I Can't," *Said the Ant*. New York: Coward (1961). With the help of an army of ants and some spiders, an ant helps repair a broken teapot amid the encouragement of the kitchen's inhabitants: " 'Push her up,' said the cup. 'You can,' said the pan. 'You must,' said the crust."

Carlstrom, N. W. *Jesse Bear, What Will You Wear?* New York: Macmillan (1986). Jesse wears not only clothes but sun, sand, flowers, food, sleep, and stars.

de Angeli, M. *Marguerite de Angeli's Book of Nursery and Mother Goose Rhymes*. New York: Doubleday (1953). This classic collection contains 376 traditional rhymes.

dePaola, T. *Tomie dePaola's Mother Goose*. New York: Putnam (1985). Traditional verses are accompanied by de Paola's lighthearted illustrations.

Hennessy, B. G. *Jake Baked the Cake*. New York: Viking (1990). To prepare for the wedding, Sally Price buys the rice, Mr. Fine paints a sign, and Jake bakes a magnificent cake.

Kirk, D. *Miss Spider's Tea Party*. New York: Scholastic (1994). When lonely Miss Spider tries to host a tea party, the other bugs refuse to come for fear of being eaten.

Lobel, A. *The Random House Book of Mother Goose*. New York: Random House (1986). More than 300 nursery rhymes are presented.

Martin, B. *Polar Bear, Polar Bear, What Do You Hear?* New York: Holt (1991). Zoo animals from polar bear to walrus make their distinctive sounds for each other, while children imitate sounds for the zoo keeper.

Marzollo, J. *Pretend You're a Cat*. New York: Dial (1990). Rhyming verses ask the reader to purr like a cat, scratch like a dog, leap like a squirrel, and so on.

Shaw, N. *Sheep Take a Hike*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1994). Having gotten lost on a chaotic hike in the great outdoors, the sheep find their way back by following the trail of wool they have left behind.

Wong, E. Y. *Eek! There's a Mouse in the House*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin (1992). After discovery of a mouse in the house, larger and larger animals are sent in after one another, with increasingly chaotic results.



Children's Book List

Alliterative books for reinforcing beginning consonants

Bandes, H. *Sleepy River*. New York: Philomel (1993). A canoe ride at night-fall provides a Native American mother and child glimpses of the ducks, fire-flies, bats, and other wonders of nature.

Base, G. *Animalia*. New York: Harry N. Abrams (1987). Each letter is illustrated and accompanied by an alliterative phrase, such as "Lazy lions lounging in the local library."

Bayer, J. *A My Name Is Alice*. New York: Dial (1984). The well-known jump rope rhyme that is built on letters of the alphabet is illustrated with animals from all over the world.

Cole, J. *Six Sick Sheep*. New York: Morrow (1993). A collection of all kinds of tongue twisters—some only two or three words long, some that tell a story, and some featuring a theme.

Geisel, T. S. *Dr. Seuss's ABC*. New York: Beginner (1973). Letters of the alphabet are accompanied by an alliterative story and humorous illustrations.

Kellogg, S. *Aster Aardvark's Alphabet Adventures*. New York: Morrow (1987). A highly alliterative story accompanies each letter.

Knutson, K. *Ska-tat*. New York: Macmillan (1993). Children describe playing in the colorful, crunchy autumn leaves as the leaves fall to the ground.

Lobel, A. *Allison's Zinnia*. New York: Greenwillow (1990). Allison acquired an amaryllis for Beryl who bought a begonia for Crystal and so on through the alphabet. Accompanied by beautifully detailed, full-page illustrations for each letter.

Schwartz, A. *Busy Buzzing Bumblebees and Other Tongue Twisters*. New York: HarperCollins (1972). A fun collection of tongue twisters.

Steig, J. *Alpha Beta Chowder*. New York: HarperCollins (1992). An alliterative humorous verse for each letter of the alphabet is presented, including "The Enigmatic Egg," "Mishmash," and "Worrywart."

Stevenson, J. *Grandpa's Great City Tour*. New York: Greenwillow (1983). Letters in upper and lower case are accompanied by numerous unlabeled objects whose names begin with the sound commonly associated with the letter being presented.

