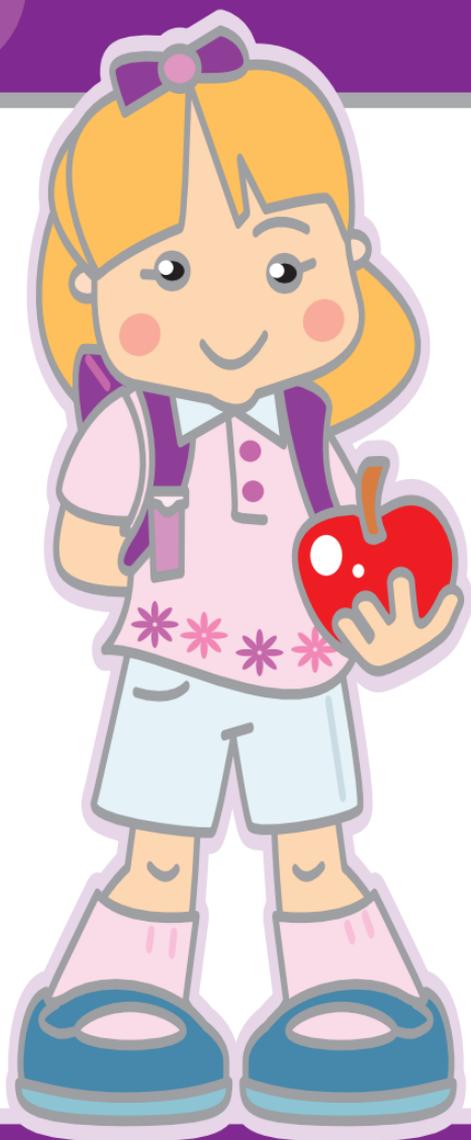


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WORD builders

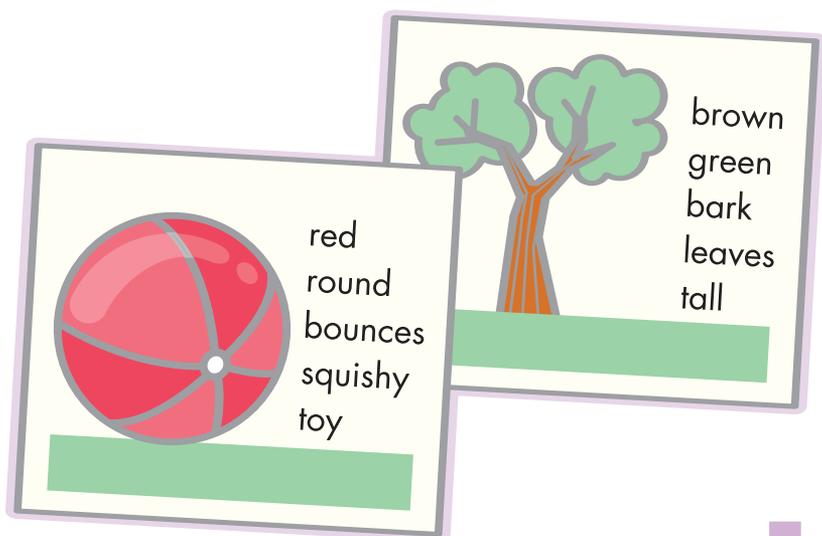


Describe Five!

Have your child find an object that he can see in the room or yard, but tell him not to say the name of the object. Then have him think of five words that tell something about the object, and see if you can guess what it is. For example, if he is looking at a red ball he can say, **red, round, bounces, squishy, toy**. Or if he is thinking of a tree, he might say, **brown, green, bark, leaves, tall**. This is also a good activity to play with another child.

Challenge: Once you have guessed the object, have your child draw its picture and you or your child can write the describing words and hang it in his room.

Your child is learning to use words to describe things.



Story Sharing

You can make up stories with your child by letting her fill in words as you go along. For example, start by saying, **Once upon a time, there was a family who lived in a _____** and let your child fill in a word. Then keep going with the story. **Here is who was in the family: a mother, and who else? _____.** **This family decided to go on a trip to _____.** And continue like this, letting your child make the story similar to real life, or a silly make-believe story. You can ask several children to take turns adding to the story.

Challenge: Let your child make up the whole story. Write down her words and read her story back to her. Let her draw pictures to go with the story if she wants. Have another person read her story, too.

Telling stories with your child will help her learn about words, language and listening.

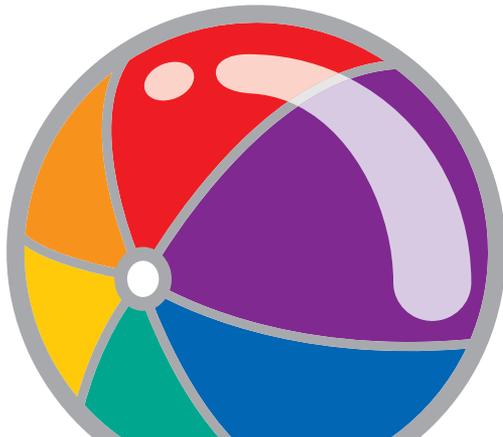


I Spy...

Did you ever play this game as a child? Look around you and choose an item that you **spy**. Say, **I spy, with my little eye, something beginning with the letter "M" (or any other letter)**. Make the sound of the letter, **The letter M makes the sound Mmm, Mmm. Do you see something that starts with an "Mmm" sound?** This is a great game to play in the car, on a walk, or even when you are stuck in line at the grocery store!

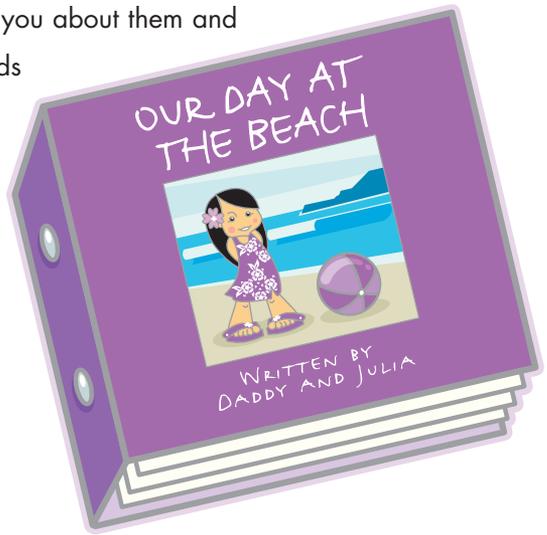
Challenge: Have your child **Spy with his little eye** and have you guess!

You child is learning that every letter makes a sound. He is learning to listen for beginning sounds in words which will help him as he learns to read.



A Special Day Book

The next time you have a special day with your child, use this activity to save the memory. Collect photographs, ticket stubs, brochures, flowers, and other things from your day. When you get home, ask your child to draw some pictures of her favorite things. Staple some pieces of paper together and write a title on the front page (for example, "Our Trip to the Zoo"). Then add your names as the authors (Written by Daddy and Julia). On each page, tape or glue your saved items and drawings. Have your child tell you about them and write down her words on the paper neatly, sounding out the letters as you write. Read it together when you are finished and save it with your child's other books.



Challenge:

Have your child "read" the book to other members of your family.

Your child is learning that words are useful in recording an event. She is also practicing her skills as an author!



Dear Friend

When was the last time you wrote a letter? Think of a person that your child likes and ask your child if he wants to write a letter to that person. Get a piece of paper and a pencil and ask your child what he would like to say in the letter. As your child talks, write his words down on the paper, exactly as he says them. Write slowly and clearly and say the sounds of the letters as you write them. Sometimes your child may want to write the letter himself. It's okay at this age if he doesn't spell the words correctly. He will learn in school, and this experience is for fun as well as learning. When you are finished, ask your child if he would like to draw a picture to add to the letter. After the letter is stamped and addressed, you can put it in the mailbox together, or go to the post office and mail it!

Challenge: Have your child trace or write his name at the bottom of the letter.

Your child is learning that words are a great way to communicate with others. He is learning letters and words in a way that is interesting and fun.



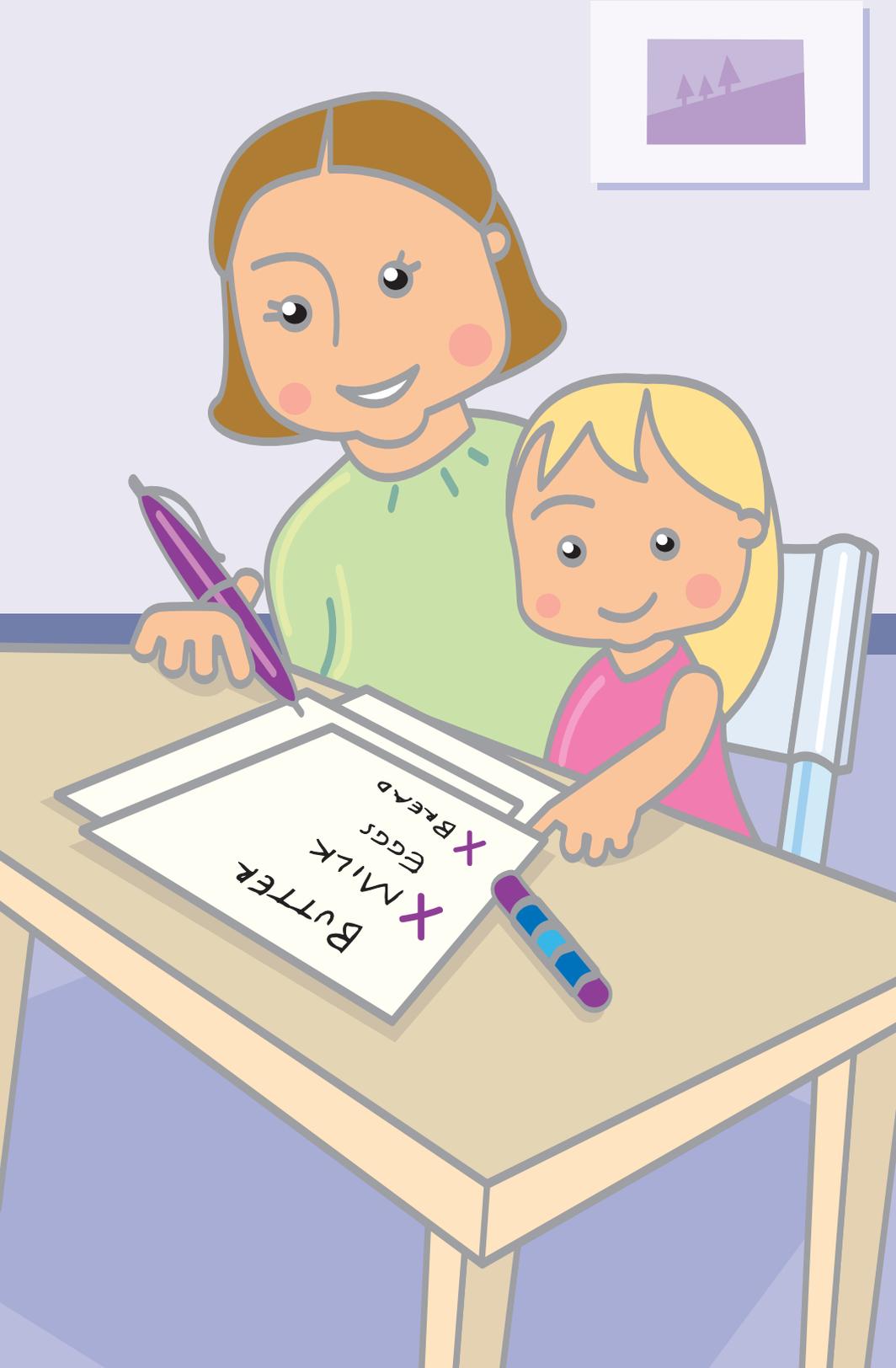
Make a List

Do you have a lot of things to do each day? You can involve your child in the process of getting them done...and strengthen her pre-reading skills! Sit down at the table with your child and tell her that you need to make a list. It doesn't matter what type of list it is, it can be a list of things that you need to do around the house, a list for the grocery store, or a list of errands. As you write the list, speak and write slowly and clearly, and sound out each of the letters aloud as you write them. Number the items on the list. Take this list with you as you and your child go through the day. Cross off items that you have finished. Ask your child to help you remember!

Challenge: Have your child find the items and cross them off herself. You may need to give her hints, **Butter starts with a "Buh" sound, so you are looking for a word that starts with a "B."**

Your child is learning that words are useful tools that can help us every day. She is also learning how letters are formed and how words are written.





BUTTER X
MILK X
EGGS X
BREAD X

Peanut Putter Pand Pelly Pandwich

Warning: This game is extremely silly! Pick a letter and tell your child that you are going to talk with that letter at the beginning of every word. Try a sentence and ask him if he can understand what you are saying. Explain how you are making the words, for example, **I'm changing the first sound of every word to "Puh," which is the sound that "P" makes! Listen carefully, Peanut butter and jelly sandwich is now peanut putter pand pelly pandwich!** Have fun trying different letters. Encourage your child to try and say things in this silly way. You can also try it with favorite songs.

Challenge: Have your child think of a different letter and try a sentence on his own.

Your child is learning about the beginning sounds of words and he is learning that every letter has a sound. He is also having fun with language!



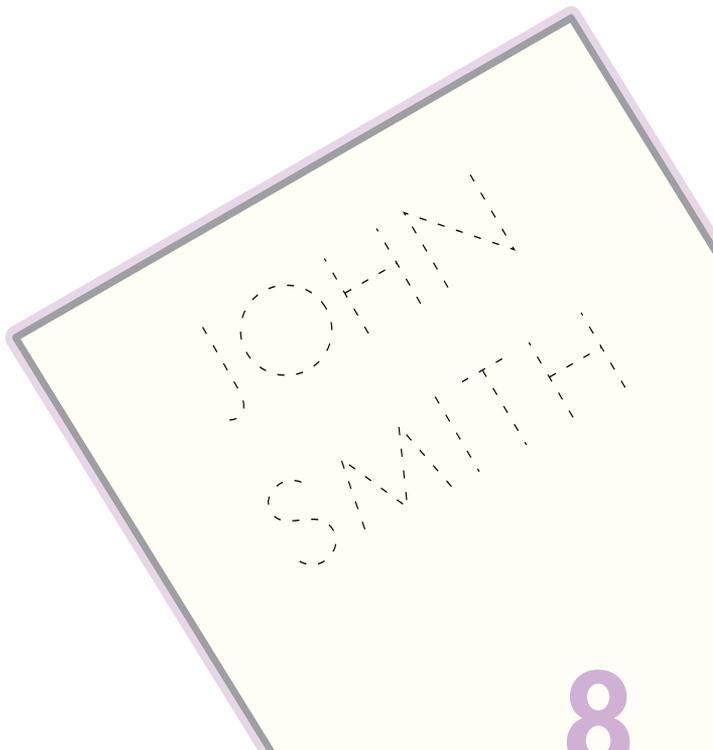
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Label It

Help your child write his name on some of his things. Use a permanent marker and write clearly. Try labeling his jacket, the inside of his shoes, the inside of a book, a lunchbox, or the tag of a favorite stuffed animal. Let him think of some things he would like to have his name on!

Challenge: Write your child's first and last name. Encourage him to try writing his name on paper. You can start by using dotted lines to form the letters and let him trace over the dotted lines.

Your child is learning to recognize his own name written down.



Read to Me

Find a time in your daily routine when you can read to your child. Before bed? After dinner? Have your child sit close to you so that you can both see the pictures and words. As you read, run your finger under the words. Experiment with changing your voice to sound like the characters in the story. At this age, your child should enjoy books that have a few sentences on each page, and may like you to read each book many times.

Each time you read the same story, expect slightly more from your child. For example, with the story of *The Three Little Pigs*, ask **Do you remember how the story ended for the wolf?** Continue with questions that help your child to use her own words like, **What do you think is happening on this page?** Ask questions that relate the story to your child's life, such as **How would you feel if the house you built was blown over?**

Challenge: Visit the library to choose books about things your child is interested in.

Your child is learning to love reading and that it is an important part of each day. This will prepare her for daily homework in school and will help her to be a better reader.

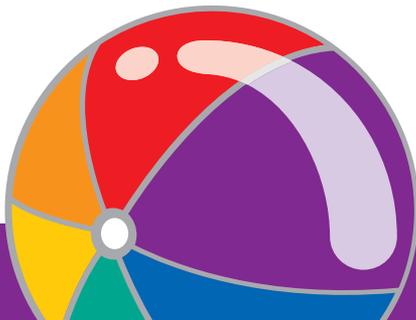


Don't Say it's Wrong, but Say it Right

Your child probably makes many mistakes when she is talking. Instead of pointing out what she said wrong, and making her repeat it back to you, just repeat the sentence back, correctly, in the form of a question. For instance, if your child said, **We goed to the store**, you can say, **You went to the store?** Don't worry, she will eventually get it right!

Challenge: Spend a few minutes before bedtime to talk with your child about her day. You can recount the activities you did together, using the correct words, or ask her what she did that day, and repeat it back to her using the correct words and sentence structure.

Your child is learning the correct rules of speech by listening to those around her speak.



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four and five year olds

Notes