

GAMES TO HELP LEARNING STAGES

A Compilation by Tammy Arp

LEARNING THE ALPHABET NAMES

Materials: Alphabet/Picture Flash Cards, Alphabet Puzzles, your choice of many products on market....

Sing the alphabet song with your child. Put alphabet puzzles together (Discovery Toys makes an excellent one). This will be a fun and good way to help him remember all their names and shapes that go with each name. It can be helpful to use a good set of flash cards that show the letter and the beginning sound it makes with a visual picture. Example: A for acorn. B for box. etc. Be careful the word chosen and the picture match a true name sound, A for acorn not A for apple, unless you want to introduce the long (name) sound and short sound of each vowel immediately together.

LETTER HOPSCOTCH:

Write the letters in chalk on your sidewalk. Have the child hop his way letter to letter saying the name/sound(s).

ABC TOSS:

Toss a ball back and forth saying the next letter in the alphabet when you catch it. This is great to play with older youngsters to help a younger child as you encourage the children to do this quickly. A player who forgets what letter is next is out. Be careful not to frustrate very young players with too quick a pace.

THE LETTER TREE: LEARNING CONSONANTS AND VOWELS AND THEIR SOUNDS:

Materials: Large sheet of paper, pen, mailing labels.

You draw (or have your child draw) a tree on the large sheet of paper that has 13 branches on each side (one for each alphabet letter). Cut your mailing labels to a smaller size, say into fourths. On your cut mailing labels, make a simple leaf shape for each consonant and a simple flower shape for each vowel. Write a consonant on the leaves and a vowel on the flowers, only one on each, until you have gone A-Z. Choosing a letter a day, we sang the following songs (modified from the Big Book of Phonics by Carson Della-Rosa) and then placed our leaf or flower in it's spot on the tree:

CONSONANTS

(To the tune of Here We Go 'Round the Mulberry Bush)

Here we go around the consonant tree, the consonant tree, the consonant tree,
Here we go around the consonant tree, so early in the morning.

Here we go around with letter (.....), letter (...), letter (...),
Letter (...) says (.....), (.....), (.....), so early in the morning.

VOWELS

(Sung to the tune of Old Macdonald...)

Every vowel has a name, a, e, i, o, u;

And every vowel has a short sound: aa, eh, ih, o, uh.

(When you get to theWith a ?????? here and a ??????? there, you can delete that or call out objects that have that short sound and long sounds and finish the song by repeating the first two verses.)

LETTER DAY—NAMES, SOUNDS, SHAPES AND EVEN EASY MATH:

Materials: Objects around the home, canned bread stick dough.

To follow up on the Consonant/Vowel tree or simply stand alone introduction of letters, assign a day for a certain letter (usually best if done in A-Z order). Sing your song, put your sticker on the tree, and then continue the theme by having your child find objects (you've placed "hidden") around the house that begin with that letter. For example hide an apple for short a, an acorn for long a, etc. Have your child find and place all the items on a tray (box lid, t-v tray, etc.). Have your child count the number of items. Play memory with him. Have him close his eyes and then take a number of items off the tray and hide them behind your back. Have your child recall what they were. Have your child do the same while you hide your eyes. Progress to not only recalling what they were but number taken and number left and number total.

Continue letter day pulling out pieces of the bread stick dough (they should be neat little "sticks" to use). Give your child enough pieces so that he may make the upper and lower case of the letter of the day. Bake up the bread stick letters. Sprinkle them with cinnamon sugar and let your child eat his snack while you read him a good story.

MAILMAN: MATCHING UPPER AND LOWER CASE—ADVANCE GAME READING—BEGINNING NUMBERS/MATH

Materials: Blank cards (business or 3x5 index) and/or old envelopes; marking pen; stuffed animals, bag to use as "mail carrier's pouch."

Make a simple set of alphabet cards, A-Z, using old business cards or the 3 x 5 index cards or even old envelopes. Put the capital letters on one set, one letter per card, and the lower case letters on another set, one letter per card. Have your child place a number of his favorite toys or stuffed animals (perhaps 8-10) around a room you've chosen. You or your child then place a Capital Letter by each toy which will become the "address" of that toy. Then hand your child the corresponding lower case cards, in random order, and have him place them in his "mail pouch" and deliver the "mail" to his toys. After he's delivered the mail, you may go out and collect the mail, and begin anew with the next group of cards.

Advanced Variation: Reading Practice.

After your child has begun to read simple words, make ***word cards** by writing words that you are studying on blank cards. Have your child place his toys around the room. Lay the word cards out flat on a table. In your mind choose a word card and state something like "Mr. Bear needs to have a cake delivered to him." Let the child find the correct word by reading the cards and then deliver the correct card to Mr. Bear. Repeat with remainder of words. The sillier the story you can make, the funner it will be for your child.

*NOTE: You can use these word cards to play Mailman—Word Variation, or as Bingo calling cards or as Sound Rummy cards, see games listed below.

Math Variation: Math/Numbers Practice.

This can also be used with number matching flash cards where one card is the number and the other card is a dot count. You could even deliver an item count of small objects to each stuffed animal (peanuts or raisins or so many "envelope letters").

TRAIN: ALPHABET ORDER, NAMES, LETTER SOUNDS, AND EARLY READING:

Materials: Blank cards (business or 3x5 index); marking pen. Phonics Pathways and Ruth Beechik's books gave me this idea that I adapted for my family.

Make a set of alphabet cards A-Z, but at the bottom of each card make a couple of train wheels so that the card becomes a train car. Put the consonants on one color of card and the vowels on another

color of card (or somehow denote consonants from vowels by color, perhaps write in different colored pens for each). Make one card to look like a simple engine, and the other to look like a simple caboose (fancy artwork is not important). Tell your child he is a train engineer and needs to get the cars lined up in the right order. Let him build his train from A-Z.

Variations: Letter Ladders and 3 Letter Words.

After your child has become accustomed to arranging the cars in the right alphabet order, begin to make letter ladders. Take one consonant, "m" for example, and the vowel cars. Make short trains of that consonant using short vowel sounds only: m-a, m-e, m-i, m-o, m-u. Have your child read the "trains." When he is comfortable with the letter ladder of that consonant, progress to making simple three letter trains of short vowel words with that consonant: mat, met, mix, mop, mud, etc. Set up your cards carefully and have him make some letter ladder trains and short vowel word trains being careful to avoid those letters that are difficult to make short words with or are spelled differently than they sound.

KEEP IT/MATCH IT *WORD CARDS: READING WORDS DRILL

Materials: Cards, Pen.

Write appropriate reading level words on cards (or use your mailman cards). (You can choose to buy colored index cards and color code by areas: i.e., all the three letter short vowel words are on red, beginning consonant blend words are on green, ending consonant blends on yellow, all the two vowel digraph words are on blue, etc.) Sit with your child. Put a card face up. If your child can read the word out loud, he keeps the card. If he can't read the word, you keep the card (for later drill). Your child can then turn in his cards for a treat or store dollar (suggested possible exchange: 10 cards right for \$1 school store bucks or a peanut per card).

Variation: Word Matching—Use Cautiously

You can make a second set of word cards and play them as an old maid, go fish or a spit-type of matching game **only** if the child must read them out loud (using proper phonics) in order to match and the phonics have been introduced for the words. This variation does reinforce the word appearance which is not bad AFTER the child has learned the phonics and has sounded out the word appropriately several times. We want him to be able to quickly read familiar words without having to painstakingly sound them out each time. Be attentive to assure overuse or misuse of word flash cards is not turning your program into a "Sight Method" program.

BINGOS: LETTERS, SOUNDS, PHONOGRAMS, MATH ETC.. (Phonics Pathways has a number of these, but the idea of a bingo is hardly unique.)

Materials: Tic-Tac-Toe pattern drawn on Paper. Markers. Call ***word cards** (or list) with appropriate words

Draw (or have your computer generate) a checkerboard or tic-tac-toe pattern on paper. Usually a grid of 4 by 4 works best. Make up a number of these either by computer, hand, or xerox. As you progress through your program, write the area you are dealing with on the cards and bingos. Example: Beginning consonant blends. Write on your bingo squares bl, br, cl, cr, etc. Write appropriate reading level words on your calling cards (or use your Mailman or Bingo calling cards). Call out a word, example: "clock." The child puts his marker on the correct consonant blend...cl. Show the calling card word to your child so he can see he is correct and see the word. (You may wish to use an oral word list if the words are too advanced and you are targeting only one sound of the word. Do not show your child words that are too advanced for him to read). Continue until he has a bingo or until the card is filled. I give a simple treat for each bingo completed (one animal cracker or gummy bear or raisin for example).

Variation:

Use gummy bears or other healthy treat such as peanuts or raisins as markers. After he completes a bingo, or the whole board, he eats his markers!! Great motivator to do the whole board!

Math Variation:

Put numbers 1-20 on a checkerboard bingo pattern. Hold up equation cards or even number cards...example $5+5=?$. Have your child place his marker in the correct answer spot.

SILENT E GAMES:

Materials: Bingo Board and Calling ***Word Cards**.

Bingo variation. Write 3 letter words on the bingo grid that can be made into 4 letter words with the addition of the silent e. Make up "e" letter markers. Call out a word (cute for example). The child finds the word cut, places the "e" letter on it and says what the new word is "cute." Again your calling cards can be used for Keep It or Mailman-Word Variation.

INDIVIDUAL PHONOGRAM/SOUND PATTERNS DRILL GAMES:

Materials: Beales' game cards, Spaulding flash cards, or small note/business cards to make your own.

FLASH CARD DRILL. INDIVIDUAL PHONOGRAM DRILL.

Play keep it flash or straight flash with the your phonics cards from Spaulding, Beale's, or your own.

BEALE'S TUBIN DOWN THE RIVER OR TEDDY BEAR PICNIC. INDIVIDUAL PHONOGRAM DRILL. Play the game as manufactured. If you use my method, make the adaptations on the back of the cards.

PHONOGRAM DOMINOES: INDIVIDUAL PHONOGRAM DRILL AND SOUND PATTERN DRILL.

Materials: Business cards and pen, or Beale's Phonogram Game Cards (with all phonogram sounds noted on back as a self-checker).

Either make up your own cards, or using Beale's Phonogram Game Cards play the cards as dominoes. Deal 10 cards to each player. Deal 2 wild cards (your make up or the Beal's pink wild cards) to each player. Set the remainder of the cards in a pile face down at the center of play. Each player places their cards face up before them (if the phonograms sounds are noted on the back, which I strongly suggest you do). Draw the top card from the pile and place it face up at the center of play to start the game. Say the card is an "a". Player one has an "ai" and an "ay." He places both cards domino style after the "a" card. A player may place one card if he has followed a phonogram grouping (an r-controlled phonogram placed by and r-controlled phonogram, a silent letter phonogram placed by a silent letter phonogram) or TWO cards if he makes an exact sound match. "ai" next to "ay" next to the "a" all can say the same long a sound. He continues until he can no longer play. (You can then have the player draw cards to fill out their 10 again in true domino style, or simply terminate that player's turn. The younger the player the better to simply terminate that player's turn with no additional cards drawn for a quicker game). The turn goes to the next person. This person has an "ea." He matches it's sound of long a to the "ai", but then his second card (as he had an exact sound match and can play two cards for one play) is an "ie" as "ie" and "ea" can both say long e. If a player has the right to an additional play but has no cards to play (the 2 cards for exact sound rule), he draws one card from the pile and plays it if he can. If he cannot, he keeps the card and his turn is over. The game continues until someone has played all of their cards.

SOUND PATTERNS RUMMY:

Materials: Use Keep It/Match It Cards of words with vowel digraphs (2 vowels that make one sound, example: ai, ea, ough, etc.) OR make up a double set of your own phonogram cards OR use your Beals' double deck of phonogram cards (with my additions added in if you like). [note: You may want to make a new double set of Phonogram Cards if you have placed your clue information on the backs of the cards for use in the Dominoes game.]

Play a rummy type game where the sets to be laid down are 3 cards of the same sound pattern. For example "taught, walk, hot" if you are using word cards; "ai, ea, ei" if you are using individual phonogram cards.

MATH GAMES

NUMBERLINE RACE: Learning Numbers 0-100, Differences between numbers, Greater/Lessor
Materials: Strip paper or adding machine roll paper, pen, small matchbox style cars.

Make a number line from 0 to 100. Roll paper out onto floor. You and your child choose a matchbox car to race. Explain to your child that you are trying to see how far you can send your cars without going past 100. You will get two chances each round if one of you goes past 100. Have child start at zero and "shoot off" his car from the zero starting line. He may not go past zero, and he may not touch his car until it stops. If he goes past 100, it is a disqualified run (and he gets one more chance on this round). Wherever his car rolls to a stop is his finishing spot, for example, he sends his car off, it rolls to a stop at number 75. Your child calls out the number he has stopped at (75). You then send your car off. Say your car rolls to a top at 69. Your child calls out 69, and then determines who is closer to 100. Play best of 3 out of 5 (or 5 out of 7, or....my son loved to play this...)

Advanced Variation:

Have your child determine how far away from 100 he is (and you are). Have your child determine how much you are from each other (69 to 75 is 6 spaces), which number is greater, which is smaller, etc.

Hint: Be attentive to his frustration level if he continually overshoots 100 or if you continually "win" the game. You may want to vary the game so that you call out a number and try to aim for that and count how many numbers off you were, or do the game in a non-competitive way. The idea is to acquaint your child to all the numbers on the number line to 100. If you send your cars to smaller numbers, it requires him to compute more of the numberline. (Unless you are as uncoordinated as I am, at which rate your car will naturally go to widely varying number ranges and your child will win most of the races).

ADDITION/SUBTRACTION RACES: Practice simple addition and subtraction within a given number range. Materials: 8 1/2 by 11 paper or tagboard , 2 playing pieces (your child's favorite—dinosaurs or teddy bears or..), business cards marked with

Make your game board by dividing your paper or tag board into a grid of 2 columns. These columns will become race lanes for your playing pieces. Now mark both lanes into as many rows as you can fit on your paper and still have room for your playing piece (usually about 10). If you are playing to more than 10, tape two boards together and continue numbering consecutively both sides to your target number (example 20). Mark your business cards with +1, -1, +2,-2, +3, -3, +4, -4, +5, -5, +10, -10. Make 3 of each +/- card.

To Play: You and your child place your markers at zero (or the starting number) in your respective lane. Explain to your child the race is to the end number (example 20). The object is to have your marker (example: dinosaur) the first to make it to 20. Shuffle the +/- cards and place them face down. Have your child turn the top card over. He then counts forward or backward the number that is said

on the card (Example +3 will send your child's marker from 0 to number 3). If a subtraction number would send you beyond zero, draw again (Example your child is on 5 and draws -10. This would take you to beyond zero to -5, an advanced concept for much later math, so he would put that card on the bottom of the pile and draw again.) Each takes turn drawing and moving his marker forward and backward according to the +/- cards stating the equation each time (Example: I'm on 15, -6 puts me at 9, $15-6=9$). Continue until someone reaches the goal number (20). Be sure to state out loud what each +/- card is doing to your marker's position.

Variation: Add additional boards to go to higher numbers and additional +/- cards (I suggest 0-10 only).

Very Advanced: Keep this game in mind for upper math when negative integers are introduced. It's a great way to example and drill negative spaces.

LEAP FROG. Counting by 2's, 3's, 5's.

Materials: 100 Chart, or Numberline to 100, markers (plastic frogs are fun).

Either on a 100's Chart or a Numberline to 100, Begin with your child at 0 and play "leap frog" either by 2's or 3's or 5's to show the pattern of counting. This is fun to do with magnetic frogs if you place your 100 chart on the refrigerator.

FAVORITE GAME MATH.

Let your child play his favorite game board game (I like the Ravensburger educational games best). BUT put in 2 dice instead of 1 so that he has to add or subtract to get his spaces to advance. He merely rolls both dice and then adds or subtracts one from the other to determine his spaces. This also works with Candyland. Use TWO cards. The child must decide which card order advances him best.

FIND THE ANSWER.

Write up math problems on a sheet. Now write the answers on a notecard (one answer per note card) in large size numbers. Now hide the answers in the house (your chosen areas). Have your child first look over his math sheet, then go FIND the answers. You can even give a self-checking clue on the back of the notecard if you so desire (a star shape to match the star by the problem on the sheet). After he has found them all, have your child recite the math problems and the answers .

Variation: Hide the equations AND the answers. Write the equations on one set of cards and the math answers on another set of cards. Hide in separate places in the house. Have your child find all the equations AND answers and then match answer to equations. After he has completed this task, have him recite the equations and answers.

HISTORY/GEOGRAPHY WALL MAP.

Materials: Paper, pen or pre-purchased outline map of the world or the USA.

Either trace an outline of the USA (or world area you are studying) or purchase a good wall sized outline map. (An outline map has the border outlines but no other markings).

As you go through your geography or history course, have your child help you draw in the appropriate event on your wall map. (Example, if you are studying the voyage of Christopher Columbus, mark where he started and his course on your map. Same with Oregon Trail, or Pony Express Trail, etc.) It's fun if you draw fun pictures that depict that part of history. When we studied early American history, we filled in the map as we filled in American's history until we ended up with all the States and much of history on our wall!

WALL TIMELINE/TIMELINE NOTEBOOK.

Using sentence strips or adding machine tape, begin a timeline of the history era you are studying. Sentence strips are fun because it is easy to move one to add another in between. If you run out of wall space, this idea can be transferred to a notebook using “pages” of history rather than sentence slips. Have your child mark the appropriate year (or better date range 1500’s age of Exploration), and then draw appropriate pictures for that era, then narrate to your or write a brief summary of that event. Add it to his timeline or notebook. If you can find it, Story Book Weaver Deluxe, an older software program from MECC, is a wonderful tool to use to create picture pages with text then file in a notebook.

MOTIVATORS: ECONOMICS—STORE DOLLARS

As I personally do not stress grades (A, B, C, D, F) for grades below highschool (and then only as a tool not a “brand”). We focused on accomplishment and completion. One way I motivated my younger children to perform well is by “paying” them in “store dollars.” Each school year, and appropriate periods throughout the year, I have my children choose items that they would be willing to place in our school store to “purchase.” (We were careful to guide our children to items that were reasonable and affordable to our family—you can look at garage sales, Good Will or the Dollar Store for less expensive items and save only one or two larger ticket items for the year). Each child works for his own stash of store items in our school store. No other child may purchase his items unless that original child voluntarily okays it. I also purchase some very cheap, low cost items that are sold for \$1 or \$2 in store dollars (example, small bite-size candy bars, sticker strips, etc.) The child then, in the course of his schoolwork, “earns” his store dollars by satisfactory completion of his school work. I give \$1 for each assignment completed with earnest effort, \$1 for superior performance (100% correct), I give additional dollars for extra effort or when warranted by the amount of work in the assignment. I take away dollars for work not completed with earnest effort, bad attitudes in school, or work not handed in in a timely or appropriately neat fashion. At the end of each school week, on Friday, we set up store, and the children may purchase items from store with the dollars they have earned. Store dollars can only be earned or lost in school. In the normal school week, my children usually earn 25-30 dollars each. My rate of exchange was \$20 store dollars for one US dollar.

The side benefits I had not originally anticipated from this motivator are math (they count and calculate their store dollars for purchases—my son has learned to count by 10’s this way, my daughter even kept a checkbook for her store dollars and wrote checks, she earned a dollar if she balanced with the “bank’s” record of her account); they are experiencing the link between work ethics and economics, and the principals of saving for a long term greater benefit versus spending money immediately (on the lesser ticket but cheaper transitory items), they are even gaining an understanding of the value of a true dollar. When a child sees something he wants, he often asks how much that would be in store dollars. It’s incredible how they have come to appreciate the value of items!

I’ve learned to keep my game ideas written on notecards and filed in a recipe box marked for games.

These are my adaptations of some familiar games, but many are stuff I just made up on the fly (as most mothers do). I’ve tried to note the original program that spawned an adaptation when applicable.

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