

Teaching Letters and Sounds

A few pointers about how sound symbol correspondence is taught and learned.

- There isn't a set sequence for introducing specific letters and sounds, although it makes sense to focus on more frequent sounds first and those that are easier to say. (b, d, j, l, m, n, s, p, t)
- Children learn sounds at various rates
- Letters and sounds should be taught at a rate of 1 to 4 per week
- When focusing on a letter, provide many activities to practice both orally and in written format (*practice printing the letter, saying the letter, saying its sound(s) finding objects that begin with that letter sound or end on that letter sound, use flash cards with images.*

For Example:

Brainstorm words beginning and ending with the sound that g makes and find pictures or objects when possible:

Beginning sounds of G: goat, ghost, go, green, gone, grass

Ending sounds of G: hog, dog, frog

Teach the basic sounds before the other sounds G makes: giant, gentle, gym, germ, giraffe (letters like g will be confusing at first as the soft g sounds also sounds like a j)

Point to objects asking if it starts or ends with the g sound.

Repeat the activities all week focusing on 1 –4 letters per week depending on

- Teach the consonants first
- When working with the vowels, use the same strategies, select the sound when it occurs at the beginning of a word (apple, ape, egg, eat, inside, open...)
- Vowel sounds will be taught after the letter sounds of the alphabet are known and are taught initially with word families (at, sat, mat, kit, lit, sit, top, mop...)
- When focusing on learning letter sounds, stick with consonant/vowel/consonant words (CVC) like hat, cup, cat, dog.
- Always try to associate the letter sounds with pictures to provide that visual cue which is why flash cards are helpful.
- Avoid teaching similar letters together like p and b or d when focusing on more than one letter sound per week.
- When leaving a letter sound to move on to a different letter sound, be sure to re-visit frequently the previously learned letter to ensure retention of knowledge.