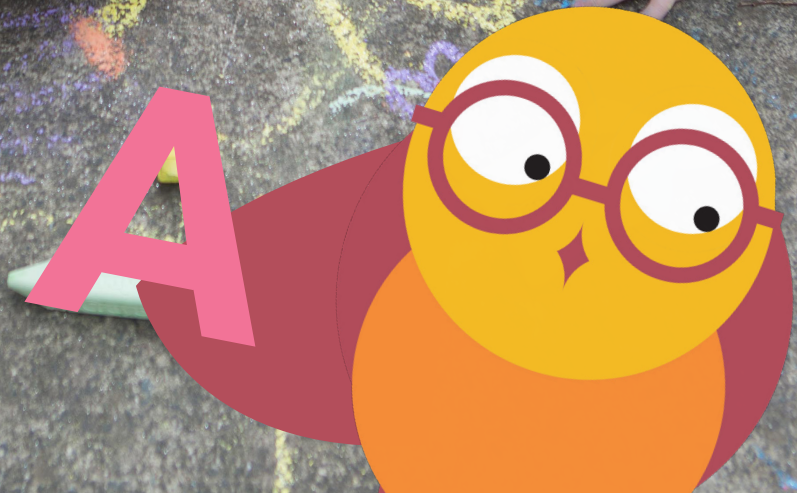




Letters & Numbers

Play Kit







How to use this resource

This resource is for you and your playgroups to use during a playgroup session or at home. Please remember, it's important to be flexible and respond to the needs and interests of the families. This may mean not all children will want to participate in planned learning experiences. Give them the option of choosing to participate, as all children learn in different ways.

At playgroup or at home there are many opportunities where children can be involved in using letters and numbers as part of their everyday routine or during play. It is important for parents and carers to talk with their children about early letter and number concepts and how these concepts can be used in everyday routines. Using everyday language and words to describe objects is important in supporting children to understand about how letters and numbers work.

Plan activities according to a child's developmental levels and interests. Encourage playgroup families to contribute their own ideas about letter and number activities.

Play in everyday life

Children's everyday experiences are full of opportunities to explore and learn about letters and numbers. You can encourage this exploration by:

- looking at the numbers on clocks or remote controls
- pointing out the letters in your child's name and suggesting they try to find these letters on billboards, street signs or supermarket packaging
- asking your child how many fruit slices they would like to eat
- counting your child's fingers and toes.

When you incorporate these activities in your child's everyday life and routine it will help them to develop a foundational understanding of letter and number concepts.

Through participating in opportunities to explore and learn about letters and numbers on a regular basis, children can develop an:

- awareness of, and interest in, exploring letter and number symbols
- understanding of how to use letters and numbers in real-life contexts
- interest in exploring sound-letter relationships
- idea on ways to talk about sounds, letters and numbers
- interest in exploring early maths concepts and problem solving in daily situations
- awareness of letters and numbers in their environment connected to their family and community contexts.



Information sources:

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/developing_early_numeracy_skills.html

http://raisingchildren.net.au/articles/activities_to_promote_literacy.html

https://www.qcaa.qld.edu.au/downloads/p_10/qklg.pdf

https://docs.education.gov.au/system/files/doc/other/early_childhood_literacy_and_numeracy_guide_update_01.pdf



The benefits of letters and numbers play

Play-based learning experiences provided both at playgroup and within the home environment support children's development of letter and number skills, which are essential life skills. But, to hone these skills, children need opportunities to use them (and to see them being used) in real-life situations.

Both at playgroup and within the home environment much of a child's letter and number learning is incidental, as they will have exposure to letter and number concepts as part of their everyday experiences.

Parents and carers can encourage their child to observe the variety of printed words in their surroundings. By supporting children to become aware of the different letters in words and sentences, parents and carers will be helping them to understand the importance of reading and writing. Also, by incorporating number skills such as counting, measuring and sorting easily into a child's everyday routine, a parent is effectively helping their child develop number concepts that have meaning within everyday life.



Information sources:

http://www.earlychildhoodaustralia.org.au/nqsplp/wpcontent/uploads/2013/11/NQS_PLP_E-Newsletter_No66.pdf
<http://www.earlyyearscount.earlychildhood.qld.gov.au/>

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**Children's everyday experiences
are full of opportunities to
explore and learn about letters
and numbers.**



This months activities:

1. Loose Parts Box
2. 3D Art
3. Magic Painting
4. Bubble Wrap Painting
5. Box Marble Painting
6. Painting with objects
7. Wax Resistance Letters



Activity #1

We're going on a Croc Hunt

Why?

Reading together is an influential and important way for children to build and experience listening and comprehension skills in children. This activity gives children the opportunity to experience reading, and helps them build their understanding of words through creative arts. By reading books together, children will become familiar with new vocabulary and begin to associate words, letters and sounds with the alphabet. Engaging with books can help with repetition, memory and rhythm, which builds mathematical foundations. Once you have finished reading *We're Going on a Croc Hunt*, get together and use your imagination to go on your very own bear hunt: Splish splash through the water, crunch and scurry through the scrub and ... argh, run away from the crocodile!

What you need?

- The book, *We're going on a croc hunt*
- Imagination!

Tip!

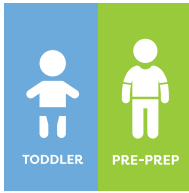
Tell the story using real-life sounds.

Instructions

1. Read *We're Going on a Croc Hunt* out loud to the playgroup.
2. Using just your imagination act out the story by pretending to splish splash in the water and do the actions of running away scared!

Extension of the activity.

- Encourage the children to dress up as an Australian animal. Portraying a particular character may help with making a personal connection to the story.
- Find or make props to carry out the experience.
- Make a book, create a story together.
- Tell the story using pictures, conversational reading.
- Go on a letter hunt, identifying letters in the book or on signs, etc.



Activity #2

Space Rock Letters

Why?

Space Rock Letters is a hands-on, fun way of learning about letters. This activity gives children the opportunity to practise letter recognition using simple materials. Children will begin to learn that the alphabet represents a set of symbols that can be used in multiple ways and settings to give meaning and purpose.

What you need?

- Different size rocks
- Chalk
- Magnetic letters
- Aluminium foil

Tip!

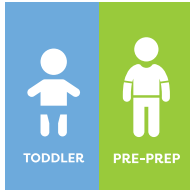
Join the letters together and create rock words or numbers.

Instructions

1. Write the number with chalk on the rock. If a child cannot write you could dot an outline of the letter that the child can trace.
2. Wrap them in aluminium foil and hide them in a garden or inside the playgroup venue.
3. Invite the children to find them on a space treasure hunt.
4. You could also place the rocks on the outline of the letter to form a rock letter after writing on the concrete.

Extension of the activity.

- Before the activity, send the children outside to help find the rocks.
- You could also use a paint brush and some water, model the letter on the rock and invite the child to try writing the letter.
- Invite children to create letters using playdough. Use letter placemats to help with this activity.



Activity #3

Chalk Numbers

Why?

Chalk numbers is a fun activity that exposes children to numbers while building strong, learning relationships. Using numbers in everyday play will help children to become familiar with them, building an understanding of number patterns and mathematical concepts. Learning without realising they are learning is the best way to learn!

What you need?

- Chalk
- Water
- Paintbrush

Tip!

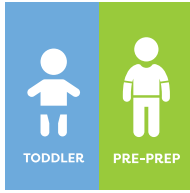
Use playdough mats with numbers.

Instructions

1. Write a number on concrete with chalk.
2. Ask children to use the paintbrush and water to trace the number on to the concrete.
3. Repeat the first step and offer children the opportunity to choose the number that is drawn or invite them to draw the number themselves.

Extension of the activity.

- Create a number garden on concrete using chalk and then use a watering can to water it.
- Invite children to use a spray bottle instead of a paintbrush to paint the chalk numbers.
- Water balloon number match
- Read counting books *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*, *Ten in the Bed*.
- Use erupting number squeeze bottles (a mixture of cornflour, baking soda, food colouring, squeeze bottles and vinegar) to create numbers on concrete.



Activity #4

Alphabet Sifting

Why?

This sensory experience provides an opportunity for children to experience and explore the world of letters, as well as helping develop hand-eye coordination and motor skills. This activity gives children the chance to examine different textures, materials and material properties through play. When children begin to understand that letters are symbols that have meaning, they take that first important step in building their life-long reading foundations.

What you need?

- Magnetic letters
- Sand or flour
- Medium-sized container
- Small colanders or sand sifters

Tip!

Use letters that spell a particular word... perhaps the name of your playgroup?

Instructions

1. Mix magnetic letters with sand or flour in the container.
2. Adults may need to model how to scoop the letters up with the colander or sifter.
3. Once a letter is collected put it aside and continue sifting until all the letters are found.

Extension of the activity.

- Use a metal baking tray to store the collected letters. Once you have collected all the letters from the container you could make words, or the names of the children.
- Add numbers to the container to encourage number recognition.
- Consider hiding animals, puzzle pieces, large buttons and shredded paper.



Activity #5

Five Grey Elephants

Why?

Through this musical experience children gain valuable early exposure to counting in a fun and creative way. When children use music in their play it helps them to learn about rhythm and beat, and develop coordination skills. This activity offers the opportunity to learn and practise counting skills while singing, and can improve their gross motor skills through balancing.

What you need?

- One long piece of string
- Parachute
- Paintbrush

Tip!

Introduce musical instruments while balancing and singing.

Instructions

1. Open up the parachute and place it down on the floor.
2. Trail the string around the outside edge of the parachute to make a circle.
3. Line one child up on the piece of string or on the edge of the parachute and encourage them to slowly walk around it singing:
One grey elephant balancing
step by step on a piece of string
thought it was such a wonderful stunt
1. they called for another elephant.
4. Add another child to the piece of string or parachute and sing:
Two grey elephants balancing
step by step on a piece of string
thought it was such a wonderful stunt
they called for another elephant.
2. Continue to add more children while counting and sing: All of a sudden, the
piece of string broke and ...
5. Encourage the children to think about what happens when the string breaks – “what do you think happened next?” ... down came all the elephant folk.



Activity #6

Fishing for letters

Why?

Fishing for letters helps to improve young children's interest in learning about letters and colours and develops their literacy skills. This activity also provides a hands-on interactive way for children to learn about letters and colour recognition. It enables children to build their developmental skills such as fine motor development, hand-eye coordination and cognitive thinking.

What you need?

- Foam alphabet letters
- 2 x bowl or deep tray
- Water
- Slotted spoon or tongs

Instructions

1. Place foam letters in a bowl and fill with water until the foam letters float easily.
2. Using slotted spoons children can scoop out letters and transfer to the empty bowl or tray.
3. Talk with the children about the different letters they are fishing for or encourage the children to fish out the letters in their name (an adult may need to help).
4. For a bit more of a challenge, have the children swap the slotted spoon for the tongs to catch the letters.

Tip!

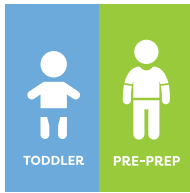
If doing activity indoors put down an old sheet to soak up any water spills.

Extension of the activity.

- Make a fishing game with chop sticks for rods, string, magnets and paperclips attached to foam numbers.

Information source:

- kiwico.com/diy/Arts-and-Crafts-Ideas/1/project/Fishing-for-Letters/303
- teaching.com.au/catalogue/mta/mta-fishing-games



Activity #7

Wax Resistance Letters

Why?

This activity encourages children to look closely at the letters as they are being drawn, whether by the child or an adult. It is a great opportunity to ask your child open-ended questions, “what letter do you think will appear when you paint it?” or “what do you think will be the next letter or shape to appear?”. You can engage children with this activity to become interested in the different letters of their own name. Children are able to develop skills in letter recognition, predicting what will appear on the paper and language extension.

What you need?

- Paint
- Taper candles
- Paper
- Chubby paintbrushes

Tip!

Try using black paper instead of white as this can be easier to see the candle drawing.

Instructions

1. Encourage the child to draw on the paper with the candle. Children will ask why they can't see what they are drawing.
2. If you are doing this with a younger child, the adult might draw a simple picture and the child can paint over it to reveal what has been drawn.
3. As the children paint over the wax drawing, they will be really interested and focused on what is appearing on the paper in front of them.

Extension of the activity.

- Introduce white oil pastels or white crayons to draw with on different coloured paper.

Information source:

learnwithplayathome.com/2015/08/wax-resist-name-recognition-and-letter.html



LETTERS
AND
NUMBERS