

Literacy Circle (Beginning Sounds)

1. Beginning Sounds "Memory" with name cards and alphabet cards

Begin as you would with 'Alphabet Memory.' Invite children to help you distribute the name cards and place their name in front of them. This time, as you review the alphabet cards that start with the same first letter of the children's names (and a few extra pairs), call attention to the sounds of the letters (e.g., "We have 'moustache' for 'Maria.' Let's all say 'MMMmoustache" and 'MMMMMaria.' Moustache and Maria both start with the /M/ sound"). Ask the children to help you lay out the alphabet cards face down in rows and columns.

As you demonstrate how to play, describe what you are doing and emphasize the sounds of initial consonants (e.g., "When it's my turn I flip over two cards. 'Key' starts with /K/ for Kevin's name. Do you hear how Kevin and key both start with the /K/ sound? Let's all say 'Kevin - key'. I also turned over a zipper for Zaida. Zzzzipper and Zzzzaida both start with the /Z/ sound. But /K/ and /Z/ are not the same sound, so I do not have a match"). As you demonstrate removing pairs that match, describe what you're doing (e.g., "Look! I've turned over a bed and a boy. They both start with the /b/ like Brianna's name. Since they start with the same sound they make a match"). Help children take turns trying to find pairs, while emphasizing the beginning sounds of the words and letters. During each turn, talk about the results and help children name the sounds (e.g., "What sound does your mouth make when you start to say the word 'dog'? /D/ /D/ like Darryl's name. Dog and Darryl both start with the /d/ sound"). When children find pairs, suggest they place them in the "match pile".

2. Sing 'Willaby Wallaby Woo' with chart

Explain to the children that you are going to sing a very silly song (e.g., "Willaby Wallaby Woo, an elephant sat on you. Willaby Wallaby Wee, an elephant sat on me. Willaby Wallaby _____ (child's name with 'W' in front of it such as 'Wara' for 'Sara') an elephant sat on _____ (the children fill in the blank with the name of the child whose name you rhymed with)"). This activity helps teach rhyming AND beginning sounds, because of the repeated 'W's. Call attention to the first sounds of the words (e.g., "I want you to put your finger on your chin when you hear a word that starts with the /w/ sound"). THEN, you can switch the w's to another letter (e.g., t, s, b) so the song changes to "Tillaby Tallaby Too..." or "Sillaby Sallaby Soo" or "Billaby Ballaby Boo"). Sing this song often, and help children begin to identify and hear the first sound of the words.

3. Beginning Sounds "Go Fish" with alphabet cards and name cards

Materials: Gather the children's name cards, and 15 pairs of alphabet cards (the letters of children in your group and a few extra pairs).

Ask children to help select their name cards and place them in front of where they are sitting. Explain how to play (e.g., "We are each going to have 3 cards. When it is your turn, you will say, 'I have a house. House starts with the /H/ sound. Does anyone have something that starts with the /H/ sound?' If anyone has a picture that starts with the /H/ sound, like 'hat', they pass it to you, and then you place your pair in the match pile. If no one has the SOUND you asked for, everyone says, 'Sorry. Go Fish!' and you pick one from the fish pond here in the middle"). Then distribute 3 alphabet cards to each child. Invite children to help you spread out the remaining alphabet cards face down like a fish pond.

Again, demonstrate how to play by asking all the children if anyone has a picture that starts with the same SOUND as the card that you have in your hand in order to make a pair. If they do, they pass you the alphabet card. If they do not, they say "No, sorry. Go fish." Then you have to "fish" for that letter card. Display the pairs, and call attention to names of objects and initial letters (e.g., "You made a pair with the ___ and the ___. They both start with the _ sound"). Help children place matches in a "match pile." (Initially, children may need to ask their friends by the name of the object or letter rather than by the letter sound. After children do this, call attention to the beginning sound (e.g., "Yes, that's a lunchbox; it starts with the /l/ sound like Leonie's name"). Over time, encourage children to identify the letter sound and to ask by the name of the letter sound rather than by the name of the object or name of the letter (e.g., "Today, when you ask for a card, say the sound of the letter in the corner. For example, I'd say, 'Do you have a card that starts with /B/?'").)

Throughout and at the end, help children identify the sounds of the letters on the letter cards that also begin each child's name (e.g., "So, Manny found two turtles. Whose name starts with the /T/ sound like in /t/-/t/- turtle? Let's look around at everyone's name cards. Look! Troy starts with a /T/ sound like turtle"). Provide help, as needed. (Over time, vary the cards used, and you can also increase the number of cards children begin with (to 4 or 5, rather than 3). This makes the game a little longer.)

4. Guess My Letter

Explain to the children that you are going to think of a letter and they will try to guess the letter. Then you will say some words that start with that letter sound, and the sound of the letter (e.g., "I'm thinking of a letter that starts the words: monkey, moon, and Manuel's name...and it makes the /m/ sound. What is my letter?"). Begin with consonants from children's names (e.g., "I'm thinking of a letter that starts the words sun, skunk, and Sadalys' name. It makes the /s/ sound. What is my letter?"). Sometimes, you may wish to record the words you listed, AFTER the children guess the letter, and post these words (with rebuses) in the Writing Center for children to write if they wish.

Over time, invite children to take turns being the 'leader'. (You can whisper assistance if needed.)

5. Movement to Beginning Sounds

Materials: Dr. Seuss' *Oh Say Can You Say?*

Explain to the children that you are going to read a very silly page from a Dr. Seuss book (*Oh Say Can You Say?*) and when they hear a particular letter sound you want them to do something (e.g., a jumping jack, hop on one foot, put their hands on their head, bend over and touch their toes, etc). Demonstrate with one page (e.g., "I'll show you...everytime you hear the /f/ sound, I'm going to raise my hand high up in the air. 'Fritz needs Fred and Fred needs Fritz. Fritz feeds Fred, and Fred feeds Fritz' Let's do it again. This time you do it with me. When you hear the /f/ sound, raise your right hand"). Do this with different sounds, and different movements. Have fun with it! You can also do this with other alliterative poems (e.g., "Sally sells seashells by the seashore" "Peter piper picked a peck of pickled peppers" "Willaby Wallaby Woo").