



Launching young readers!

# Reading Rockets

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## Letters and Sounds: Practical Ideas for Parents

By: Texas Education Agency

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*Provide your child with the opportunity to learn that written words are made up of letters that match the sounds in spoken words.*

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Children can be taught to match the sounds with letters in an orderly and direct way. For example, the letter *n* matches the /n/ sound in *nurse*).

Here are some activities to try:

- Make letter-sounds and have your children write the letter or letters that match the sounds.
- Play word games that connect sounds with syllables and words (for example, if the letters "p-e-n" spell *pen*, how do you spell *hen*?).
- Write letters on cards. Hold up the cards one at a time and have your children say the sounds (for example, the /d/ sound for the letter *d*).
- Teach your children to match the letters in their names with the sounds in their names.
- Point out words that begin with the same letter as your children's names (for example, *John* and *jump*). Talk about how the beginning sounds of the words are alike.
- Use alphabet books and guessing games to give your children practice in matching letters and sounds. A good example is the game, "I am thinking of something that starts with /t/."
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your children reach into the bag and take out letters. Have them say the sounds that match the letters.

- Take a letter and hide it in your hand. Let your children guess in which hand is the letter. Then show the letter and have your children say the letter name and make the sound (for example, the letter *m* matches the /m/ sound as in *man*).
- Make letter-sounds and ask your children to draw the matching letters in cornmeal or sand.
- Take egg cartons and put a paper letter in each slot until you have all the letters of the alphabet in order. Say letter-sounds and ask your children to pick out the letters that match those sounds.

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*Adapted from: Beginning Reading Instruction: Practical Ideas for Parents. (1996). Texas Education Agency.*

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Reading Rockets is a national multimedia project that offers a wealth of research-based reading strategies, lessons, and activities designed to help young children learn how to read and read better. Our reading resources assist parents, teachers, and other educators in helping struggling readers build fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills.

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