

Appendix B

More Than 50 Ways to Learn Letters Without Holding a Pencil

1. Use magnetic letters to sequence and match letters. Build words and sentences.
2. Use felt letters or alphabet cards to sequence and match letters.
3. Put plastic letters in a feel bag or box and let children guess what letter they are feeling.
4. Paint letters on an easel.
5. Finger paint letters.

Write letters with your finger:

6. in cornmeal
7. in sand
8. in pudding (dry or prepared)
9. in foam soap
10. in shaving cream
11. in bird seed
12. in colored sand
13. Glue beans, noodles, cloth, cotton balls, miniature marshmallows, rice, or paper to make mosaics in the shape of letters.

14. Use push pins to outline letters.
15. Build letters with Playdough, pretzel, or bread dough.
16. Use letter stamps to sequence the alphabet or words.
17. Air write letters. Use a dowel with colorful streamers attached.
18. Water paint letters on the blackboard.
19. Make letters with wikie sticks or pipe cleaners.
20. Play alphabet bingo.
21. Play mystery writing: take the student's hand and write a letter with his or her hand while his eyes are closed. Have the student guess what letter it is.
22. Cut out letters with scissors.
23. Provide wooden, cardboard, or paper shapes to build alphabet letters.
24. Use Scrabble tiles to match letters, build words, or sentences.
25. Use computer games and programs to reinforce letter recognition such as "Baily's Book House" by Edmark.

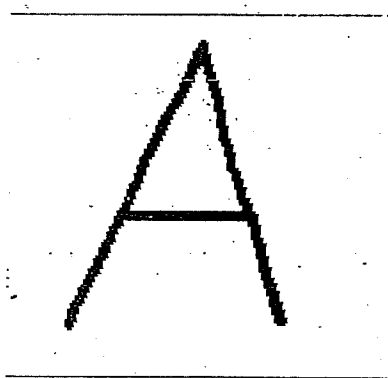
Use masking tape or rope to make letters on the floor and have children:

26. trace letters with their feet
27. walk or crawl on them following the path of the letter
28. drive toy cars on them

29. follow the shape of the letter by "painting" with a paint roller (paint free of course!)
30. roll them out with rolling pins
31. hop or jump along the letter lines

Make alphabet cards for matching (visually or by touch) and tracing with:

32. colored glue
33. yard and glue
34. dry Jello and glue
35. puff paint
36. glue and sand, cornmeal etc.



Note: You can make the tactile alphabet cards by either cutting out alphabet shapes from cardboard and covering it with the tactile media or by "writing" the letter with glue and covering that area with the tactile media.

Write letters on:

37. Magna-doodles
38. clay trays (Styrofoam tray with clay spread on it. Use a dowel to write the letters in the clay.)
39. black boards
40. dry-erase boards
41. paper with sandpaper under it

42. paper with a bumpy board under it
43. Sort letters.
44. Play "go fish" with alphabet cards.
45. Fish for letters using a homemade fishing pole with a magnet hanging on a string. Letter cards can have paperclips placed on them.
46. Complete an alphabet puzzle of all the letters or sequence alphabet cards.
47. Make alphabet cards and cut them into half; have students match them.
48. Have students match upper and lowercase alphabet letters.
49. Find letters in magazines, books, on cereal boxes and other household items.
50. Hide letters in sand, rice and beans, or birdseed and have students find them and identify them by feeling them.
51. Make an ABC book by cutting out pictures that start with a given letter.
52. Sponge paint letters.
53. Play "I spy" with letters. For example: "I see the letter r hiding on this page"; "I see a word that begins with the letter r." Then have the student find the letter or word.
54. Play Concentration or Memory with letter cards. Place cards face down. Each student takes a turn by turning over two cards. If they match they are removed. If they don't match, the cards are turned over again and the next student plays. Use as many or as few matching letter cards as you want.

55. Make body letters. Give several students a letter to make. Have the students use their bodies to form the letter. They may try doing this standing or lying on the floor. Have other students guess the letter.
56. Sew letters by making your own lacing cards in the shape of letters or having the students sew their names onto colored burlap.
57. Play "guess a letter." Give clues about a letter and have students guess the letter. "I am thinking of a letter that is short, and comes after d in the alphabet." Ask the student to tell the name and sound of the letter
58. Play "what letter is missing." Sequence alphabet cards from A to Z. Remove several letters and have students guess what letter is missing.
59. Play "that's not right." Sequence alphabet cards but misplace several cards. Have the students find the errors and correct them.
60. And when students are ready to write letters on paper, do it with

Crayons,
Markers,
Chalk,
Paint,
Grease pencils,
Colored pencils,
Vibrating pens,
and a
Number 2 pencils

Final Words

- Handwriting is a **two-handed activity** so reinforcing bilateral hand use is important. Time and attention should be given to the development of both hands, with either hand taking the dominate role for dexterity tasks (stringing beads, lacing, etc.).
- It is great to incorporate motor tasks into an activity, but remember not to assign activities that place too high a demand on motor skills, if a high cognitive demand is also being required. Such dual demands may be overwhelming for some children.
- Handwriting is a **lifelong skill** and deserves considerable attention. Starting handwriting instruction before readiness skills have developed may, however, cause frustration, the development of inadequate compensatory strategies, and poor writing habits.