

Teaching Reading Through Play

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Course Overview

Welcome to *Teaching Reading Through Play*. As a certified teacher with a master's degree in elementary reading and literacy, I understand the dynamics of reading.

As a homeschooling mom to seven, I also know it's very possible to teach your children to read without fancy supplies or expensive curriculum. You can teach reading through play. This course will help you along the way.

Designed for early learners who already know the names and sounds for all 26 letters, this course will build on those existing literacy skills. Through intentional play and activities, you'll gently guide your little learner into reading.

As a beginning reading course, we'll focus mainly on short vowel sounds this year. Toward the end of the year, long vowel sounds will be introduced.

Structure

Divided into 180 short lessons, this course will last for a 36-week school year. It'll cover 36 essential reading topics, one for each week.

Each topic features five short activities specially designed to teach reading through play. I recommend doing one activity each day, five days each week. That's because short, repetitive exposure of a concept over time is usually more beneficial to young learners than longer lessons less frequently.

Each week, you'll find some key information just for parents before you dive into the daily activities. This information will give you insight into the science of teaching reading and answer some of your "why" questions.

Parent Involvement

The early years are essential for building a solid foundation for learning. That means instructor involvement is necessary. However, I understand how limited time can be. That's why you'll find short lessons and easy-to-set-up activities.

Materials

Don't worry; you won't need anything fancy for this course. I've designed lessons around typical household items, books that are readily available at most libraries, and common toys.

Each week has a materials list and instructions for preparing for the week. That way you're ready to read each day!

Happy Reading!

SAMPLE

Week 1: Mommy Letters & Baby Letters

Materials:

- 52 index cards
- Permanent marker
- Large bowl (plastic preferably—it will be played with)
- Large pot
- Wooden spoon

Preparation:

Using the permanent marker, write a large capital letter on one index card.



Continue preparing cards like this until you have done A-Z.

Next, write a large lowercase letter on an index card.



Continue preparing cards like this until you have completed a-z.

Note: we'll be using these index cards again in the weeks to come, so hang onto them.

Week 1: Introductory Information

Note: The first few weeks of this course focus on reviewing letters and sounds through play, ensuring that your child is ready for reading. If you realize that your student isn't quite ready to move on, you can spend additional time working on letters and sounds before continuing.

Why Does the Alphabet Matter?

[Research](#) shows that familiarity with the alphabet is one of the biggest predictors for reading success. To put that another way, the easier it is for your child to name and give the sound for every letter of the alphabet, the more likely it is that s/he will be a great reader in the future.

The alphabet is essential. It's the building block for the English language. Every book ever written in English uses those same letters—they're just arranged differently.

The alphabet is the foundation to reading. Your child should be able to easily name all 26 letters by name AND sound.

Capital & Lowercase Letters

Letters come in two forms: capital and lowercase. To read, your child needs to know them both. The activities this week focus on identifying capital and lowercase letters and matching them up.

I've always taught my children this concept by using the terms, "Mommy Letters" and "Baby Letters." Young children are very familiar with family matters and know that mommies and babies go together.

Once they have the concept down, I start interchanging the proper terms, "capital" and "lowercase," and they've easily transitioned into those words themselves.

Week 1: Activity 1

Mommy & Baby Letter Hunt

Materials needed: Prepared index cards

Today, you and your child will take turns hiding and finding your letter cards. As you find the cards, place them in a row on the floor. When other cards are found, place them in ABC order around that first card.

This will give your child practice ordering letters as well as identifying them.

Procedure:

1. Have your child select between the Mommy Letter or Baby Letter cards.
2. Have your child cover his or her eyes while you hide 13 cards around the room.
3. Let your child find a card and tell you what letter was found.
4. Place the card in a row on the floor.
5. Continue until all 13 cards are found.
6. Let your child take the final 13 cards.
7. Cover your eyes while your child hides the cards.
8. Look for the cards, tell your child what letter you found, and add them to the row.
9. When all cards are found, sing the ABC song together.
10. Repeat with the other set of cards, if desired.

Week 1: Activity 2

Mommy & Baby Letter Match

Materials needed: Prepared index cards

Today's game focuses on matching Mommy and Baby letters.

Procedure:

1. Arrange the Mommy Letter cards in ABC order then place them in a stack.
2. Scatter the Baby Letter cards around the room.
3. Hand your child a Mommy Letter card and ask him/her to find the missing baby.
4. Once a match is made, stack the Mommy and Baby cards and place them in a row.
5. When all 26 Babies and Mommies are reunited, sing the ABC song together.

Week 1: Activity 3

Mommy & Baby Letter Toss

Materials needed: Prepared index cards, large plastic bowl

Today's game focuses on identifying Mommy and Baby Letters.

Procedure:

1. Shuffle the Mommy and Baby cards together.
2. Set the bowl on the table.
3. Have your child stand back several steps.
4. Hand him/her a random card.
5. S/he says the name of the letter.
6. If s/he is correct, they get to try to throw the card into the bowl.
7. If s/he doesn't know the letter quickly, have him/her hand it back to you. Put it at the bottom of the stack to try again later.
8. Continue until all cards are thrown.
9. Count the cards that made it in the bowl.
10. Sing the ABC song as you clean up any cards that missed.

Week 1: Activity 4

Letter Jump

Materials needed: Prepared index cards

Today's game focuses on identifying Mommy and Baby Letters.

Procedure:

1. Arrange both sets of cards in ABC order.
2. Grab the Mommy A, the Baby B, the Mommy C, and so on, alternating Mommy and Baby Letters until you get to Z.
3. Use this alternating set of cards for today's game.
4. Set the cards in ABC order on the floor around the room.
5. Have your child jump from letter to letter, saying the name of each letter as s/he lands.
6. Repeat, having your child crawl from letter to letter.
7. Repeat, having your child tip-toe from letter to letter.
8. Repeat with different moves, as many times as desired.
9. Have your child pick up the cards, putting the Mommy Letters in one pile and the Baby Letters in another pile.
10. Sing the alphabet song.

Week 1: Activity 5

Mommy & Baby Letter Soup

Materials needed: Prepared index cards, large pot, wooden spoon

Today's game focuses on identifying Mommy & Baby Letters in random order.

Procedure:

1. Set pot and spoon on the table and tell your child that today you'll be making alphabet soup.
2. Scatter both sets of letter cards around the room.
3. Send your child to fetch a certain "ingredient" for your soup: "Find me a Mommy Q."
4. Have your child find the card, put it in the pot, and give it a stir.
5. Send your child for another ingredient. "Find me a Baby e."
6. Have your child find the card, put it in the pot, and give it a stir.
7. Continue until all 52 ingredients have been added then give the soup a final stir.
8. Have your child separate the cards into Mommy and Baby piles.
9. While you put the Baby cards in ABC order, have your child do the Mommy cards.
10. Sing the ABC song.

Next week, we'll be learning about disguises that some spy letters use.