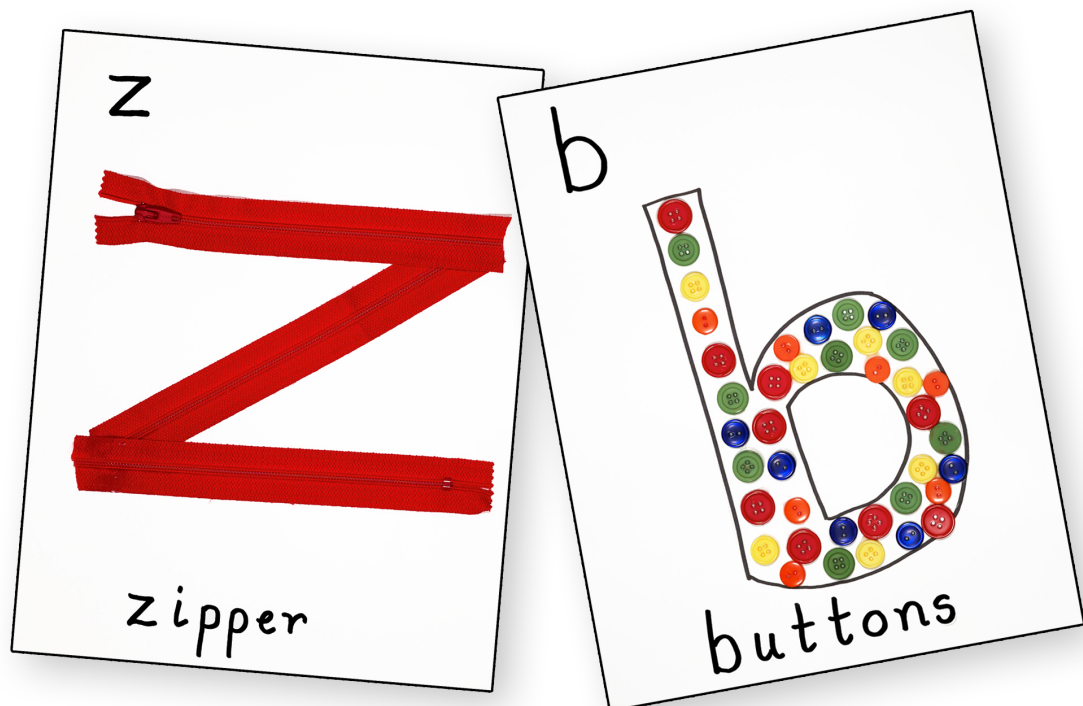


# Using a Letter of the Day



presented by  
**KidsTalk**  
NEWSLETTERS  
marenschmidt.com

# Using A Letter Of The Day Strategy

Maren Schmidt, M. Ed.

## **How do we help the older child who doesn't recognize the sounds and make important letter/sound connections?**

We can use the letter of the day strategy to focus on the sounds and letters needed.

First, help the child understand two things: what is known and what needs to be learned.

Here's a simple exercise.

### **What I Know/What I Need To Learn**

Write each of the 26 letters of the English alphabet on 3 x 5 cards.

In random order, ask the child what sound each letter represents. When the child knows the sound put the card on one side. When the child doesn't know the sound, put it the other side.

My experience over the years is that most children who aren't good readers and spellers at age 7 and 8 only know 10 letter sounds or less.

The next step, after running through this stack of alphabet cards, is to bring to the child's awareness what they know and what they don't know.

Fold a piece of notebook paper in half and write "I know" on one side and "I need to learn" on the other. Make the lists from each stack of letter cards. Keep this list on your refrigerator or someplace visible and handy.

The next step is to systematically focus on a letter of the day from the "I Need To Learn" side of the list.

Once a week, redo the letter sound recognition activity. Make two piles as before, "What I Know" and "What I Need To Learn".

With the list you made earlier, have your child cross off the sounds he now knows and add them to the "I know" side of the paper.

It's a great feeling to see that "I know" list grow!

**Here are some activities to implement a letter of the day strategy:**

## Artistic Alphabet

**Purpose:** To introduce the child to all the letter sounds of the alphabet

- Materials:**
1. Twenty-six 5x7 index cards or other heavy weight paper
  2. Various materials to glue onto each letter card, names of which begin with a corresponding letter, such as m/macaroni, b/beans, etc. These can also be stickers, magazine pictures, etc.
  3. Scissors
  4. Glue
  5. Basket to store cards

On each card draw a dark outline of a lowercase letter. Then glue on the corresponding materials.

Set aside to dry. When dry, display in the basket.

Let your child help find materials to correspond to their letters. Here are some ideas:

- a- apple seeds, ant, apple or alligator stickers
- b- beans, buttons, beads
- c- cotton balls, corn seed, colored comics, cloth
- d- dots from a hole punch, dirt (only for the adventurous!)
- e- eggshells
- f- feathers, flag stickers
- g- glitter, gauze, gift wrap
- h- hay
- i- igloo, iguana stickers or drawings
- j- jelly beans, old jewelry
- k- keys, pictures of kiwis
- l- lace, lollipop wrappers
- m- macaroni
- n- nutshells
- o- pictures of otter or octopus
- p- peanuts, popsicle sticks
- q- quilt (use fabric or paper to create)
- r- rubber bands, rice
- s- sand, salt, string
- t- tape
- u- umbrella stickers or pictures
- v- velvet, Velcro
- w- wallpaper, watermelon seeds
- x- I usually make little exit signs to glue on, or use fox, box
- y- yarn
- z- zippers (from old clothes)

Keep these letters handy and review them everyday as your collection grows.

## Examples of other activities to do each day:

For the next day, or week, do letter and sound recognition activities for that letter. Take the letter “m”, for example:

1. Eat things that start with the letter m, milk, macaroni, marshmallows, mashed potatoes, meatloaf, etc.
2. Go on a “m” hunt in your house, yard or neighborhood.
3. Make a “m” poster or cards with cutouts from a magazine.
4. Dance like a monkey while holding the letter “m”.
5. Moo like a cow. Meow like a cat. Etc.
6. Make a necklace with the letter.
7. Have your child use his index and middle fingers to trace over the 3-D artistic alphabet card.
8. Use salt dough to make the letters.
9. Write the letters with chalk on the sidewalk, or patio, or driveway.

## Find other ideas in this book:

**365 Phonics Activities** by Sandra Fisher, et all. Publications International, Ltd, 2000.

**Here is a list of words whose initial sounds will help you make the sounds of each letter.**

a	apple	j	jump	s	snake
b	ball	k	kick	t	take
c	cat	l	lick	u	up
d	dog	m	mom	v	van
e	egg	n	not	w	wagon
f	fox	o	otter	x	box
g	go	p	pot	y	yes
h	hot	q	quilt	z	zoo
i	igloo	r	rock		

**It’s a challenge is to know how to make each sound. Here’s how.**

Let’s look at the letter “b”.

The letter name for “b” is pronounced “bee”.

The sound of “b” is more like “buh”. Trying saying the word “ball” and stopping yourself after you get the “b” sound out.

The “uh” part of “buh” is very, very soft and if you can say it without any “uh” sound, that is even better.

**Questions?** Email me at [maren\\_schmidt@me.com](mailto:maren_schmidt@me.com)