

How To Play

The I Spy Game



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How To Play The I Spy Game

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What is one of the key skills a child needs to become a successful reader?

Here's the short answer: Phonemic awareness.

The longer answer: Phonemic awareness means being able to hear the sounds within a word.

For example, with phonemic awareness we can hear three individual sounds in the word "dog". Duh-ah-guh.

(See next page for information on how to make the letter sounds.)

Closely connected to phonemic awareness is letter/sound recognition.

That means we know that this symbol, d, makes this sound, duh.

And that the sound "duh" can be represented by the letter, d.

When children lack strong phonemic awareness as they enter their elementary years, spelling and reading can become a nightmare for them, if they are relying on only their visual memory of words to read and write.

Add a lack of letter sound recognition and their spelling and reading nightmare doesn't seem to end.

Reading is not fun. Spelling is not fun. Learning is not fun.

How do we help our children?

For the child age 2.5 through 6 years , we can help build phonemic awareness by playing a simple game, called *I Spy*.

Playing The I Spy Game:

Gather ten or so items on a tray, rug, or mat. I like to keep ten items in a basket and rotate items as I see the children master certain key sounds.



Invite your child to play the I Spy game with you. Name the objects. Here I have a cup, a fork, a spoon, ...

I spy with my little eye something that begins with the sound of "cuh".

For the first time to play the game I like to assure success by placing the item in my hand, making it obvious to the child what I am "spying".

If the child doesn't see the connection, I simply place the object in the child's hand and repeat: *I spy something with my little eye that begins with the sound of "cuh".*

Here give the child time to figure out what item starts with a "cuh" sound. If the child tells you cup, say, *Yes, cup starts with a cuh. Cuh -cup.*

If the child doesn't recognize the sound, simply smile, point to the object, and say, *I was thinking of cup. Cuh, cup. Let's do another object.*

The purpose of this game is to help a child learn to hear sounds. There is no right or wrong.

Laugh and have fun as you work with your child. With this game your child will learn to recognize the sounds in our language, a critical foundation for life-long learning success.

You can also play this game in many different ways. You can play it with parts of the body, items on a table while you are waiting in a restaurant, items you see on a walk. There are many variations.

Step Two: Once your child hears most of the the initial sounds in a word, begin introducing ending sounds. *I spy with my little eye something that ends with a "puh" sound. Yes, I was thinking of cup.*

Again, you might need to hold the object in your hand the first few times of doing the ending sounds.

The third step is to do internal sounds: *I spy something that has the sound of "uh" init. Yes, I was thinking of cup.*

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

a	apple
b	ball
c	cat
d	dog
e	egg
f	fox
g	go
h	hot
i	igloo
j	jump
k	kick
l	lick
m	mom
n	not
o	otter
p	pot
q	quilt
r	rock
s	snake

t take
u up
v van
w wagon
x box
y yes
z zoo

**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.

Some people hear and pronounce the sounds better using the ending sound of a word:

a am
b tub
c tic
d lid
e egg
f if
g mug
h hut
i if
j jam
k ink
l full
m am
n in
o on
p up
r run
s toss

t mat
u up
v move
w win
x box
y yet
z quiz

There are also 15 basic phonograms with their sounds. You can introduce these with the I Spy Game. Many times our children “discover” the phonogram sounds on their own.

qu quilt
ai aim
ee see
ie pie
oa oat
oo book
ue blue
oy toy
er her
ar car
or or
th moth
sh push
ch much
au Paul (US pronunciation only)

Note: There are more than 15 phonograms in the English language. These are the 15 basic ones. These 15 phonograms plus the letter sounds contain the 40 sounds that are foundational for later letter/sound recognition skills.

Q is noted as a letter and a phonogram. In English q is always followed by a u.