

# PLAY & LEARN AT HOME



October 2020

## LEARNING ON THE GO

You can use the **words** and **symbols** that children see every day to help them grow print awareness skills. Kids are noticing print all around them, and are starting to learn that these symbols have meaning! Point out words on boxes, on signs, and in books.



You can also play with environmental print like **this at home** – your child will begin to see themselves as a reader!

- With a jar or box that holds your child's favorite food, ask them if they know what's inside, when they answer, you can say "Yes, it's peanut butter! And these words say peanut butter!"
- Make a puzzle out of empty boxes of foods your child eats frequently. Cut out part of the box and cut it into smaller pieces. Have your child put the pieces back together and tell you what's on the puzzle. Point out the words. Puzzles of only 3 pieces work best for younger children.
- Play logo bingo! Make a bingo card out of logos, signs and words your child recognizes – Lego, Cheerios, PJ Masks – and when you call out "can you find where it says LEGO?" they put a sticker or a small object on the word.
- Make a print scavenger hunt! Print or draw pictures of signs and words your child recognizes that you see every day – the Target sign, a stop sign, your street sign, the Starbucks sign – and take a walk or a drive to look for logos and "read" them..

## FAMILY PLACE

**Print Awareness** is an important steppingstone to learning to read; it includes the understanding that printed letters and words on a page mean something and figuring out how books are organized. Print awareness is one of six identified pre-reading skills and it is something young children can easily develop through reading and playing with books. **Here are some ideas:**

- Let babies play with books. They love to turn the pages and board books are meant to be handled *and chewed!*
- Point out word boundaries – the spaces in between words – and eventually, punctuation and common sight words. For example, once your child gets the idea, take turns finding an exclamation point!
- Run your finger under the words you are reading from left to right and top to bottom so children will learn directionality of print. How do they react if your finger draws squiggly lines? Do they notice if the book is turned upside down?
- Read wordless books together and encourage your child to tell their own story about what is happening in the pictures while you write it down.
- Draw attention to individual letters – Make a game of hunting for the first letter in your child's name, for example, and eventually move on to cover the entire alphabet.
- Books like these that have just a couple of words, or that repeat certain words, help children to start recognizing and "reading" those words:



Look!  
by Jeff Mack



Dude!  
by Aaron Reynolds

## LITTLE EXPLORERS

From stop signs to restaurant logos, **environmental print** is everywhere. Talking about print that is all around helps children learn that print has meaning. The print can be in books, on signs, or anywhere else in the environment.

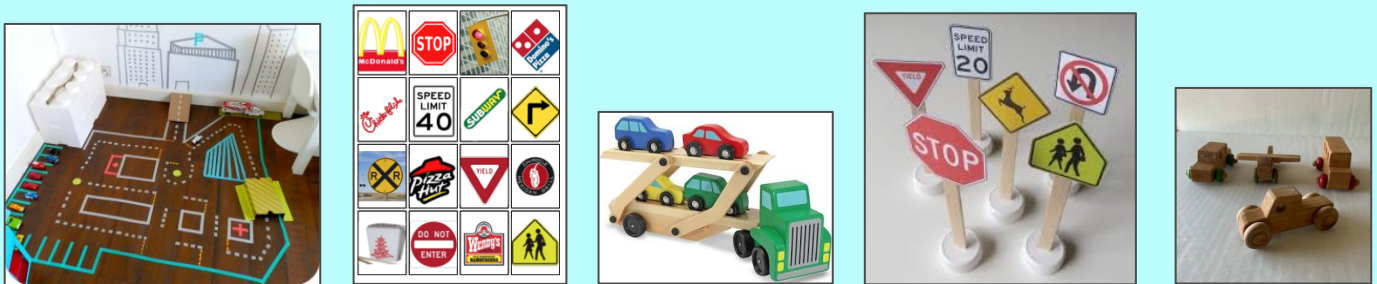
### Try It Outside!

Choose a simple sign to focus on during one car trip (example: stop sign, pedestrian crossing, one way sign.) Have your child count the number of signs seen along the way. Point out to your child that the same sign has the same message each time. Talk about the sounds of the letters you can hear.

- “The S sounds like this! Sssssss. It makes a ssssssss sound.”

### Tape Town Activity

Encourage your child to use their **engineering skills** and help you build tape town! Place masking or painter’s tape on a floor to create roads and buildings. Use any vehicles, toys and items you have to help create Tape Town. I created a car wash, a library, a grocery store, a hospital and a parking lot. My boys used the vehicles to drive on the tape and go to each of the areas! I added **road signs** and **familiar logos** for buildings. Cut logos from bags, boxes, food labels or packages. My boys played with tape town for several weeks!



## READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!

Sending mail is a great way to get children thinking about why we **write**!

When sending your postcard, talk about the parts of a letter and what they’re used for: the greeting, the body of the message, the closing, the signature, the return address and the address of the recipient.

Make sending your postcard into an event! Walk to a mailbox, demonstrate how to open the door and send your letter off with a goodbye and good luck!

Want to get your child even more excited about writing? **Try these fun activities:**

- Make a map of your neighborhood together, adding major cross and side streets.
- Write out your address and phone number and ask your child to say it with you. Sing it to the tune of “Frere Jacques” to help your child remember it.

303, 303,  
542, 542,  
7279, 7279,  
That’s my number, that’s my number!  
(from *lastingthumbprints.com*)



- Fill out an address book! Together, write down the addresses of family and friends. Maybe the next card you send out can be to one of them!

For even more resources, or to talk to an early literacy librarian, visit [arapahoelibraries.org/0-5](http://arapahoelibraries.org/0-5), or create an Educator and Parent Support request at [arapahoelibraries.org/educator-and-parent-support](http://arapahoelibraries.org/educator-and-parent-support).