

Hi! I'm Leah!



Thank you for purchasing this early learning guide! Before I became a mom, I earned my Master's degree in Reading Curriculum and Instruction. Not long after, I left public schools to teach with the Charlotte Mason philosophy. While I had to forget much of my training, I found that it was really helpful in some areas—especially in reading instruction! I put together this play-based curriculum using my knowledge of teaching reading and the Charlotte Mason philosophy.

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Introduction

This play-based early literacy guide was inspired by my four-year-old. No sooner had she turned four than she began asking to learn how to read. Every day, she begged me to teach her this coveted skill. This was quite the dilemma. The teacher in me knew that she probably wasn't developmentally ready yet, but the mom in me wanted to kindle her desire to learn. As a result, I created play-based "lessons" that intentionally cover letter sounds, pre-reading skills, and skills that are important in the Charlotte Mason educational philosophy.

THE CHARLOTTE MASON APPROACH TO EARLY LITERACY

Charlotte Mason suggested to wait to begin formal lessons until the age of six. However, there is much to be done before that! She said:

"As for his letters, the child usually teaches himself. He has his box of ivory letters and picks out p for pudding, b for blackbird, h for horse, big and little, and knows them both. But the learning of the alphabet should be made a means of cultivating the child's observation: he should be made to see what he looks at. Make big B in the air, and let him name it; then let him make round O, and crooked S, and T for Tommy, and you name the letters as the little finger forms them with unsteady strokes in the air. To make the small letters thus from memory is a work of more art, and requires more careful observation on the child's part. A tray of sand is useful at this stage. The child draws his finger boldly through the sand, and then puts a back to his D; and behold, his first essay in making a straight line and a curve. But the devices for making the learning of the 'A B C' interesting are endless.

There is no occasion to hurry the child: let him learn one form at a time, and know it so well that he can pick out the d's, say, big and little, in a page of large print. Let him say d for duck, dog, doll, thus: d-uck, d-og, prolonging the sound of the initial consonant, and at last sounding d alone, not dee, but d', the mere sound of the consonant separated as far as possible from the following vowel.

Let the child alone, and he will learn the alphabet for himself: but few mothers can resist the pleasure of teaching it; and there is no reason why they should, for this kind of learning is no more than play to the child, and if the alphabet be taught to the little student, his appreciation of both form and sound will be cultivated. When should he begin? Whenever his box of letters begins to interest him. The baby of two will often be able to name half a dozen letters; and there is nothing against it so long as the finding and naming of letters is a game to him. But he must not be urged, required to show off, teased to find letters when his heart is set on other play." (Home Education, pages 201-202)

WHAT YOU'LL FIND IN THIS GUIDE

Using these guidelines, this early literacy guide addresses the following areas:

- Alphabet sounds
- Visualizing letters and making mental images
- Forming upper and lower case letters
- Playing with sounds (syllables, segmenting sounds, blending sounds, etc.)
- Observation

It also utilizes other aspects of a Charlotte Mason early years education:

Lesson 10

Letters: D, G (short sound) and review all letters

Materials: Wooden letters, sidewalk chalk, printables #1 and #2

Daffodils

Daffy-down-dilly has come to town
In a yellow petticoat and a green gown.

If the weather permits, move this lesson outside.

Discuss the rhyme, visualize: Ask your child to picture a daffodil. If it is springtime, see if you can find a daffodil.

Segmenting: See if your child can identify the /d/ sounds in “daffy-down-dilly” by separating the first sound from the rest of the word. If not, that’s okay! Segment the sounds in “daffodils.”

Introduce letter D: Find the wooden letter and let your child observe it.

Syllables: Ask your child to clap once for each syllable as you slowly say these words “yel-low,” “daf-fy” and “dil-ly.” You can also have your child jump up and down for each syllable.

Segmenting: Segment the sounds in “green” (g-r-ee-n) and “gown” (g-ow-n).

Introduce letter G: Find the wooden letter and let your child observe it.

Application: Using printable #2 and sidewalk chalk, let your child write the letters that he has learned in the last few lessons. If the weather doesn't allow for this, use letter building materials instead.

Hopscotch: Help your child make hopscotch squares that contain some of the letters he has learned so far (use printables #1 and #2 to remind you!) As your child hops from letter to letter, ask him to say the sound the letter makes.

If you can't do this outside because of the weather, save this game for another day.