



Letter/Sound Instruction

Children with alphabetic knowledge can do more than say their ABCs. They can name and identify letters, make the letter sounds, and form the shapes of the alphabet quickly and accurately. They can also recognize individual letters in various forms (such as capital and lowercase) and identify letters that are similar in shape.

In the *DLM Early Childhood Express*, children learn about letters and sounds each day. The concept of alphabet is introduced in Unit 1, Week 1. Children learn the ABC song, start to identify the first letter of their names, and are introduced to the idea of capital and lowercase letters.

Individual letters are introduced in clusters rather than in alphabetical order. Instruction begins with letters whose sounds children can produce in isolation and with the least distortion, such as *s*, *m*, and *p*. Instruction also focuses on letters children can use to read words as soon as possible. For this purpose, some letter relationships are clearly more useful than others: *s*, *m*, *a*, and *t* appear in more words than *x*, *v*, and *q*. Letter clusters are sequenced as follows:

Unit 1: A, S, M, D

Unit 2: P, F, O, L

Unit 3: T, E, G, R

Unit 4: B, I, N, K

Unit 5: C, U, X, V

Unit 6: J, H, Y

Unit 7: Q, W, Z

Unit 8: Review

Daily letter/sound instruction incorporates the following principles:

- Instruction and activities focus on the letter name, sound, and formation together. Children look for similarities and differences in letter shapes, sounds, and articulation of those sounds.
- Uppercase and lowercase letters are introduced together.
- Students have multiple opportunities to see, say, read, and write each letter.
- Instruction is supported by ABC components (such as the *ABC Big Book*, *Alphabet Wall Cards*, and *ABC Picture Cards*) that include realistic photos to help reinforce letter names and sounds.

