

VERMONT EARLY LEARNING STANDARDS

MODULE 3: FAMILY ACTIVITIES

ACTIVITY 3: LETTER FUN

AGE: Preschoolers

WHAT YOU'LL NEED:

- A large cookie sheet or a large baking pan
- Salt, sand, pudding, hand lotion or shaving cream
- A smock, apron, or an old shirt to put over your child's clothes

PURPOSE

Learning to write can happen in many ways, not just with a crayon or a marker. One way that you can help your child learn to write is by having them practice making letters in different kinds of materials. Getting their hands into things that are soft, squishy or rough makes learning to write fun for your child!



This activity relates to these elements in the **Literacy Development** domain of the VELs:

- Foundational Reading Skills
- Writing

HERE'S WHAT YOU CAN DO!

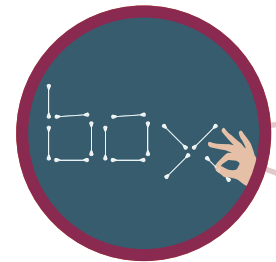
1. Choose one of the things suggested in the list above, such as shaving cream, and put enough into either the cookie sheet or the baking pan to cover the bottom.
2. Give your child examples of words and letters. Examples might be food containers (such as the salt box), or words that you have written on paper. Ask your child to copy the letters by moving their finger around in the pan.
 - » Show your child how to erase their letters to start over by shaking the pan side to side (for things like salt and sand) or by smoothing out the top (for things like shaving cream, lotion or pudding).
3. Talk with your child about the letters and words they are making. Give them help to help them make letters. For example, you can say, "An A is made by going up, then down, then across." Use your finger and have your child copy what you do. Praise them for their efforts.



SWITCH IT UP!

Here are some different ways that you and your child can do this activity throughout your day together.

- If English is not your home language, you may choose to have your child do this activity in English, or in your home language, or both!
- Have your child make pictures, then ask them to tell you what the picture is. Write the words on paper and have them copy them in their pan.
- This activity works well in the bathtub, with things like shaving cream, lotion or pudding. Have your child stand up and write letters and words on the side of the tub. When you are finished, you can wash your child and the tub to end bath time.
- Salt and sand can also be used outside; a box with dark paper taped inside can work the same way as the pan. Children may also find patches of dirt or sand on the playground or in your yard; have your child use those as well to write and draw.
- If you have them, small pieces of rope, sticks or Q-Tips can also be used to create letters and words. You can still use the pan or box – they may help keep these items from rolling around or falling off a table while your child is playing.
- Write the letters on a piece of paper. Give your child dried beans or cereal pieces to lay on top of the lines to form each letter. If you want to keep your child's letters, help them put glue on the lines.



BRIDGING ACROSS DOMAINS

These are ways to work on other areas of development (or bridge across domains) during the same activity.

- **Language:** Talk with your child while they are exploring the different materials, and talk with them about how they feel, using words like rough, scratchy, squishy, and sticky.
- **Movement:** Using large paint brushes, a bucket of water and the side of your house or building, water “paint” large letters and words on the wall. Have your child use their whole body, using their legs and arms to squat and stretch to make the biggest letters they can. If you don't have permission to use the side of your building, the driveway or parking lot works just as well.

CHECK IT OUT!

Visit your local library and check out these books to read with your child.

- *Chicka Chicka Boom Boom* – Bill Martin Jr. and John Archambault
- *Dr. Seuss' ABC* – Dr. Seuss
- *Alphabet City* – Stephen T. Johnson
- *The Hidden Alphabet* – Laura Vaccaro Sieger
- *At the Beach* – Huy Voun Lee



