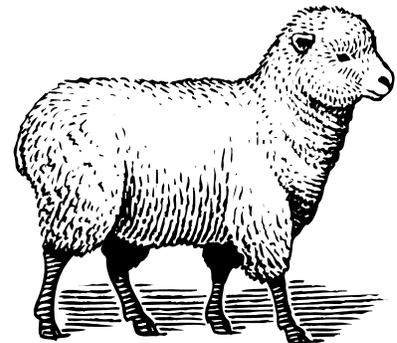


Guidelines for Using Speed Drills with Young Children

- These drills will help children increase the speed and accuracy with which they recognize the letters of the alphabet. Fluency and automaticity for accurate letter naming can only be addressed once the child has had GOOD instruction forming memory for the grapheme (visual image of the letter shape) and letter name.
- Introduce the letters in the same order used by your Reading Program. Lacking a Core Program, use: a, m, s, t, b, c, f, h, o, n, p, r, g, i, d, j, k, l, v, u, q, z, w, x, e, y
- When teaching about letters, teach that letters have NAMES and SOUNDS. Ask students to say the name of the letter and the sound when highlighting them.
- If children lack this very basic sound-symbol connection understanding, start with a picture page of animals and teach the difference between the NAME of something and the SOUND it makes.





Ask them to name each animal and tell the sound it makes. Ask, **"Is this a moo?"** while pointing to the cow. **"That's right, it's a cow, the name is cow, and the sound it makes is Moo."** or **"No, this animal says moo, but its name is cow."**

Do this with every animal pictured and then say **"Let's play a game! I'll point to an animal and say "name" or "sound." If I say "sound," you tell me the sound that animal makes. If I say "name," you tell me the name of it."** Give feedback each time, **"That's right!"** **"No, that's the sound, try again"** or **"Wow, you said that one FAST!"**

Repeat the game, increasing speed as you go so that the student response time gets faster and faster. Once the student is quite successful, but not necessarily perfect, you can move on to letter name/sound instruction.

"These are letters of the alphabet. Each one has a name and at least one sound that it makes. We're going to learn the name and a sound for each one." Then introduce the letters using the same order of your reading program. Learning 26 letters and the corresponding sounds takes time and daily practice. Don't try to teach too many letters at once. Help students make the letter shapes on dry erase boards, paper, etc. while you coach them. **"Start at the top, straight down, now over to the right on the bottom line to make the capital L."** Once you have provided good letter name and sound instruction, students can use the speed drills to build fluency with letter recognition.