

[Narrator] Letter recognition, alphabetic principle, and phonics. These are the topics discussed in the next section. In kindergarten, some children are just learning letter names. Others, the connection between letters and sound, and some of them are beginning to use this knowledge to read and write words.

[Student] "I love my mommy and daddy."

[Narrator] This teacher reinforces letter recognition by emphasizing the shape of letters.

[Teacher] There are letters here and letters here that are just made out of sticks. Find two stick letters. Just the sticks.

[Student] A 'u' and an 'n', but look, turn it upside down and now that's a 'u' and that's an 'n.'

[Teacher] Amazing.

[Narrator] There are many fun ways to teach letter recognition through song, chant, and alphabet mats and arcs.

[Student] And that word starts with 'b.'

[Narrator] Once children learn to recognize letters, they begin to associate sounds with letters. Phonics instruction helps children learn the alphabetic principle, that the sequence of letters in written words represents the sequence of sounds, or phonemes, in spoken words. This teacher demonstrates several ways to teach letter-sound correspondence. One way is to use flash cards.

[Teacher] Name the letter?

[Teachers and student] V.

[Teacher] The key word?

[Teachers and students] Valentine.

[Teacher] The sound is?

[Teacher and students] /v/.

[Narrator] Another way is to use hand mirrors.

[Teacher] Look in your mirror while you're saying that sound.

[Teacher and students] /v/.

[Teacher] Do you see what's happening there? /v/. You see your teeth touching your bottom lip? /v/. Good, let's put your mirror away everyone.

[Narrator] Yet another technique is to let the students feel the vibration of the sounds.

[Teacher] All right, let's make the sound again.

[Teacher and students] /v/.

[Teacher] Did you feel a vibration there? /v/. Did you feel it? Okay, wonderful.

[Narrator] Children learn to sound out words.

[Teacher] This is a new word for you, ready?

[Narrator] Pictures and letters can be used to teach letter-sound correspondences. Giving children many opportunities to write in centers and in journals promotes letter knowledge, phonological awareness, and phonics. As children begin to write words, they use their knowledge of sounds and letters to spell words.

[Student] Look, that's how a 'y' goes.

[Narrator] Linking sounds to letters is an important step in learning to read.