

# Letters & Literacy



Additional Literacy Experiences for  
the Unit,  
"Let's Explore Patterns"



# Important Information

The following experiences are designed to complement the Gee Whiz teaching unit, “Let’s Explore Patterns.” These experiences are not required! Instead, they are a tool you can use to integrate an exposure of letter names, letter sounds and creative writing into the curriculum IF you feel your children are ready. This website has great information on print and alphabet knowledge. There are four sections to explore: KNOW, SEE, DO, IMPROVE. Check it out: <https://eclkc.ohs.acf.hhs.gov/school-readiness/effective-practice-guides/print-alphabet-knowledge>

Keep in mind that children develop at their own rates. Many four and even five-year-olds may not be ready to identify letters and this is OK. You need to think about each individual child and his/her level of development. These activities and experiences should only be used with those children who you feel are ready to explore letter concepts.

Additionally, to make sure that you are exposing children to letter names, letters sounds and writing in a meaningful way, this document provides suggested times when we feel it would be meaningful to do so.



## Letter Exposure Activities for “Let’s Explore Patterns”

| Activity Title    | Page # | Letter(s) to Integrate              | How?  |
|-------------------|--------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Polka Dot Toss    | 5      | Letters you would like to reinforce | <p>During this experience, the children play a game where they try to toss beanbags on a polka dot pattern. If you have children in your group who are working on letter recognition skills, you can print letters on the polka dots. For instance, let’s say you’ve chosen to make a blue, yellow, blue, yellow pattern on the floor. You could then write letters on those blue and yellow polka dots in a pattern as well (e.g., g, p, g, p). Choose letters the children are working on and write them in lowercase. The majority of reading that we do involves lowercase letters and not uppercase ones so it is VERY important that children can identify lowercase letters. If you’ve chosen to make more than one polka dot pattern for this game, you could reinforce more letters at the same time.</p>  |
| Patterns & Shapes | 7      | F                                   | <p>During this experience, the children will explore stamp painting with a variety of items. As they do so, they will discover that some of these items create patterns while others do not. As an extension of this experience, print the word <i>fork</i> on a piece of paper while children watch. Talk about the letters that make up this word. Then, focus on the letter F at the beginning. Do any of the children have a name that begins with the letter F? What sound does this letter make at the beginning of the word <i>fork</i>? Next, challenge each child to use a crayon or marker to print a large letter F (or f) on a sheet of white paper. Then, have them use forks to stamp paint patterns on the large letter. Once the paint dries, you may find it helpful to write “The word fork begins with the letter F” on each child’s creation so parents/guardians better understand the goal of the experience.</p> |
| Count the Stripes | 9      | Any letters with straight lines     | <p>During this experience, the children will play a counting game with construction paper stripes. As a follow-up experience, invite those children who are ready to see if they can use the “stripes” to create letters. Through trial and error, the children will quickly discover that they are able to easily create letters with straight lines such as A, E, F, N, etc. but they probably will not be able to create letters such as B, G, O, etc. As you observe the children as they explore, be sure to record anecdotal notes and/or take a video. Both options would be great additions to each child’s portfolio. In addition, be sure to engage the children in conversations about the letters they choose to create. This will help you evaluate which letters the children can not only identify but also create.</p>  |

## Letter Exposure Activities for “Let’s Explore Patterns”

| Activity Title    | Page # | Letter(s) to Integrate                  | How?  |
|-------------------|--------|---|---|
| Long, Long Snakes | 11     | Any letters you would like to reinforce | <p>During this experience, the children will use playdough to create snakes with patterns on them. As an extension of this experience, with children who are ready, invite them to create “word pattern” snakes. To prepare for this experience, choose a 3-4 letter word (e.g., cat, dog). Then, print individual letters on small paper plates enough times that the children can create a pattern when arranging them. For instance, if you choose to use the word <i>cat</i>, then you would need to make 3-4 paper plates with the letter <i>c</i>, 3-4 with the letter <i>a</i> and 3-4 with the letter <i>t</i>. The challenge will then be for the children to arrange the letter plates to create a “word snake” by putting the plates in the correct order and then repeat.</p>   |
| Camouflage Art    | 13     | Letters in color words                  | <p>During this experience, the children use art materials to create camouflage creations (e.g., yellow on yellow, red on red, etc.). As part of this experience (for children who are ready), incorporate color words. As each child creates his/her camouflage art, talk about the color he/she is using. Then, while the child watches, print the color word on a sheet of paper and name letters while doing so. Be sure to write the color word in the matching color of marker. Talk about the letters that make up the color word. Which ones can the child identify? Which ones is he/she still working on learning? Note this information in each child’s developmental folder. Then, challenge each child to name 3 things that would be “camouflaged” on their art. For instance, if the child made a yellow on yellow collage, he/she might say, “Lemon, banana, block.”</p> |
| Sing After Me     | 17     | B, I, N, G, O                           | <p>During this experience, the children will sing along with you as you sing the song, “BINGO.” This song naturally invites you to talk with children who are ready about the letters, B, I, N, G, O. After singing the song, print the letters B, I, N, G and O on separate sheets of white paper as the children watch. Can the children name each of these letters? Do any of them have these letters in their names? Next, repeat the song, “BINGO” but this time, when you get ready to sing B-I-N-G-O, have the children hold up the corresponding letter instead of singing it. This will not just require the children to identify the letters but it will also require them to listen very carefully and respond quickly.</p>  |