

Sandpaper Letters

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Purpose

To help a child identify the sounds represented in graphic form.

To teach a child the correct writing direction of the letter shapes.

Age: 3 – 4 years old.

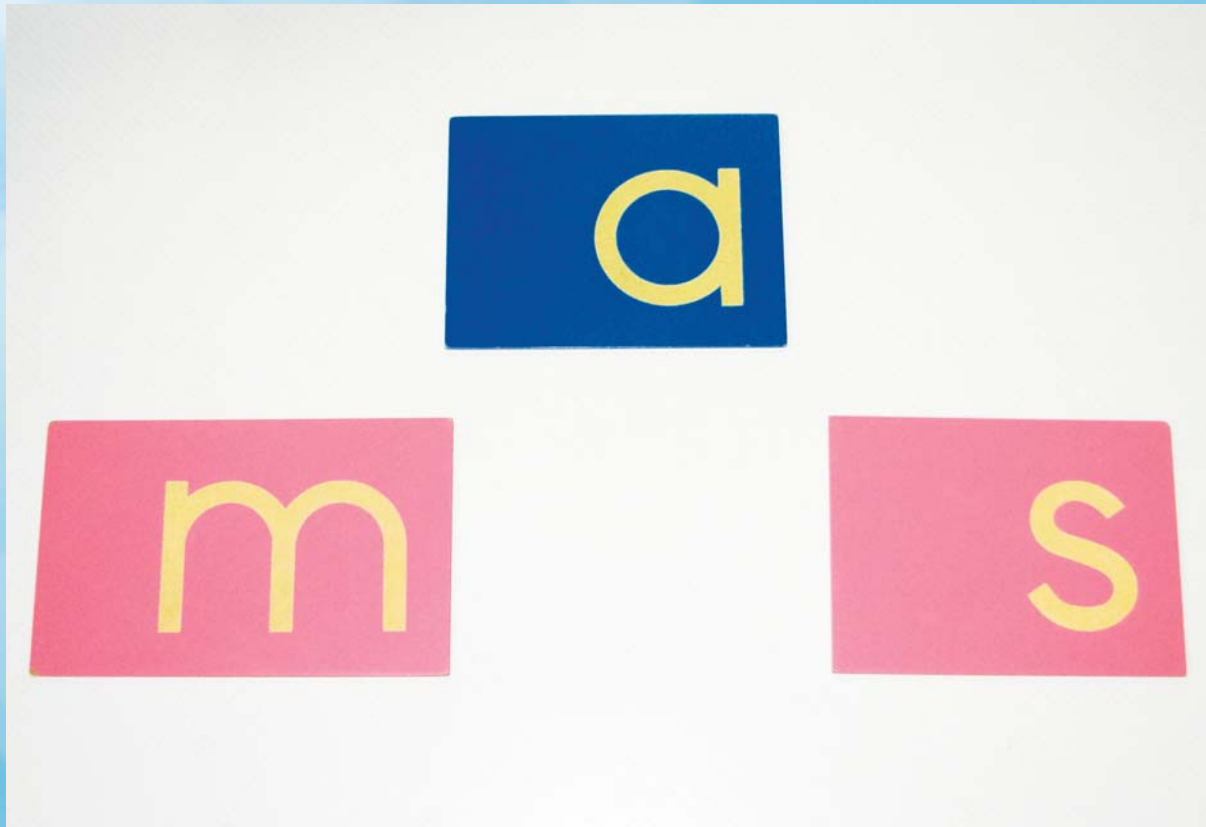
Prerequisite

Introducing the Objects.

“I Spy” With Sound Pouches.

Preschool children continue to explore and learn about their environment by using all of their senses. Particular senses are more sensitive during different developmental stages. Understanding this developmental predisposition and incorporating a rich, sensory-specific environment during critical learning periods are core Montessori foundations. Accordingly, while children are still in their tactile stage of development, Sandpaper Letters are an integral multi-sensory learning tool. Sandpaper Letters were designed to integrate letter and phonetic recognition by touch, sight, and sound.

Sandpaper Letters are usually the first didactic material introduced to children that require them to associate a phonetic sound with its written symbol. It is an important stepping stone that lays the groundwork for reading and writing efficiency.



Presentation

A Possible Order

So that children can start using the letters they learn as soon as possible, organize your program so that most of the vowels are learned within the first 15 – 17 letters/sounds.

Introduce letters/sounds in an order that emphasizes the difference in their physical construction, as well as sound. For example, “b” should not follow “d” because of their physical similarity, and “a” should not follow “e” because of their sound similarity. Below is a possible order which works well:

a s m e t c o p u d f j

g l b i n w r h y q z k

v x

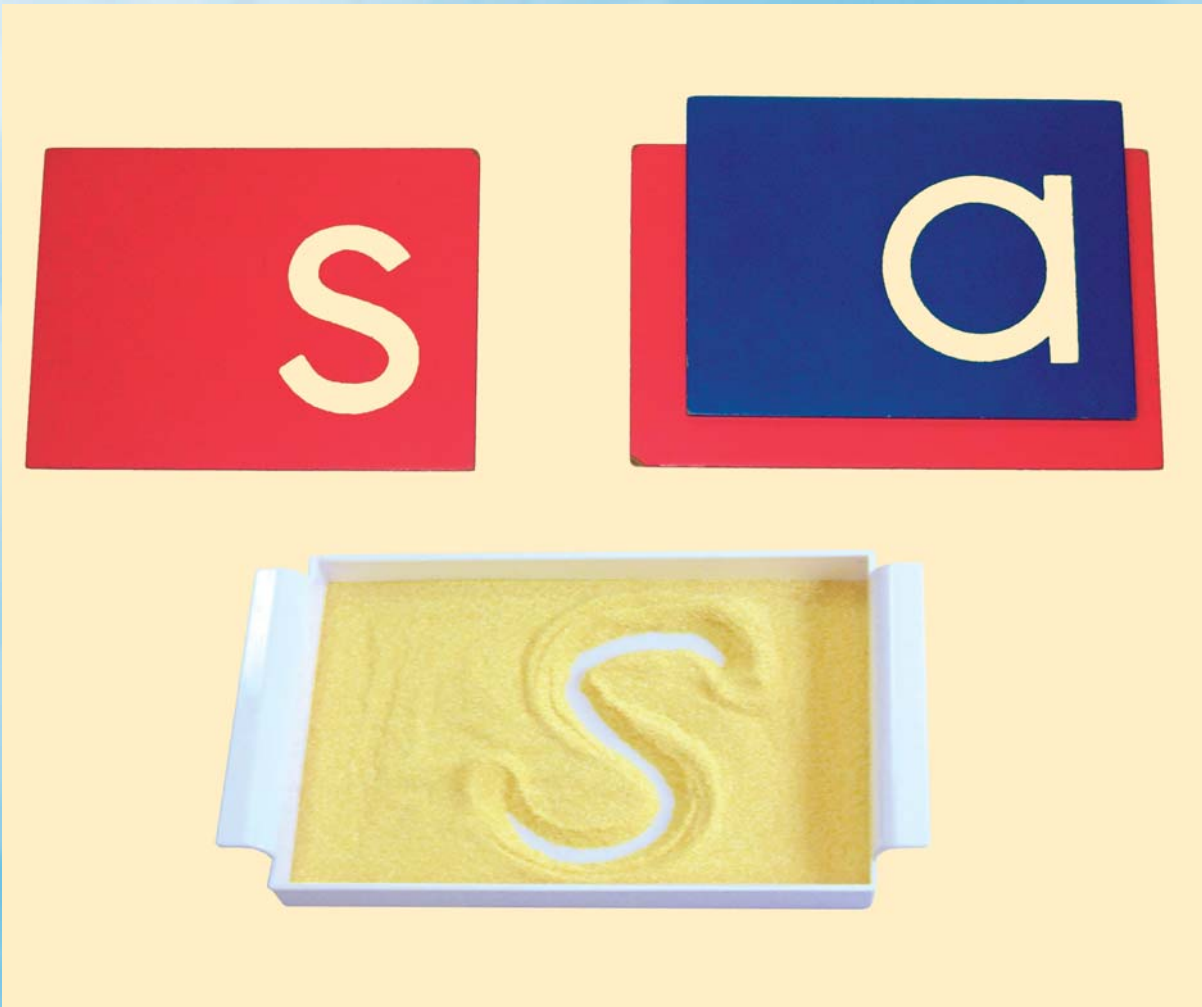
Material

Sandpaper Letters.

Presentation

- Invite one child to a table.
- Select three distinct letters that are easy to sound out, e.g., “m”, “a” and “s”.
- Place one letter in front of yourself; slowly and lightly trace it three times with your two primary fingers.
- Say the sound at the end of each tracing.
- Ask the child to repeat your demonstration.

Note: Remind the child to trace very lightly, if necessary.



Extension 1

- Repeat the procedure with the second and third letters.
- Arrange all three letters in front of the child. Conduct a Three Period Name Lesson which includes the child tracing the letters.

Note: Trace the letters only once for each lesson in the Three Period Name Lesson.

Note: It is important that the teacher maintains a written record of each child's progress with the Sandpaper Letters. For example, print the alphabet on an index card for each child and label it with the child's name. Underline each letter after the child has been introduced to the sound it represents. Review these letters/sounds with the child every few days. After he knows a letter/sound, circle it on his index card.

Extension 1

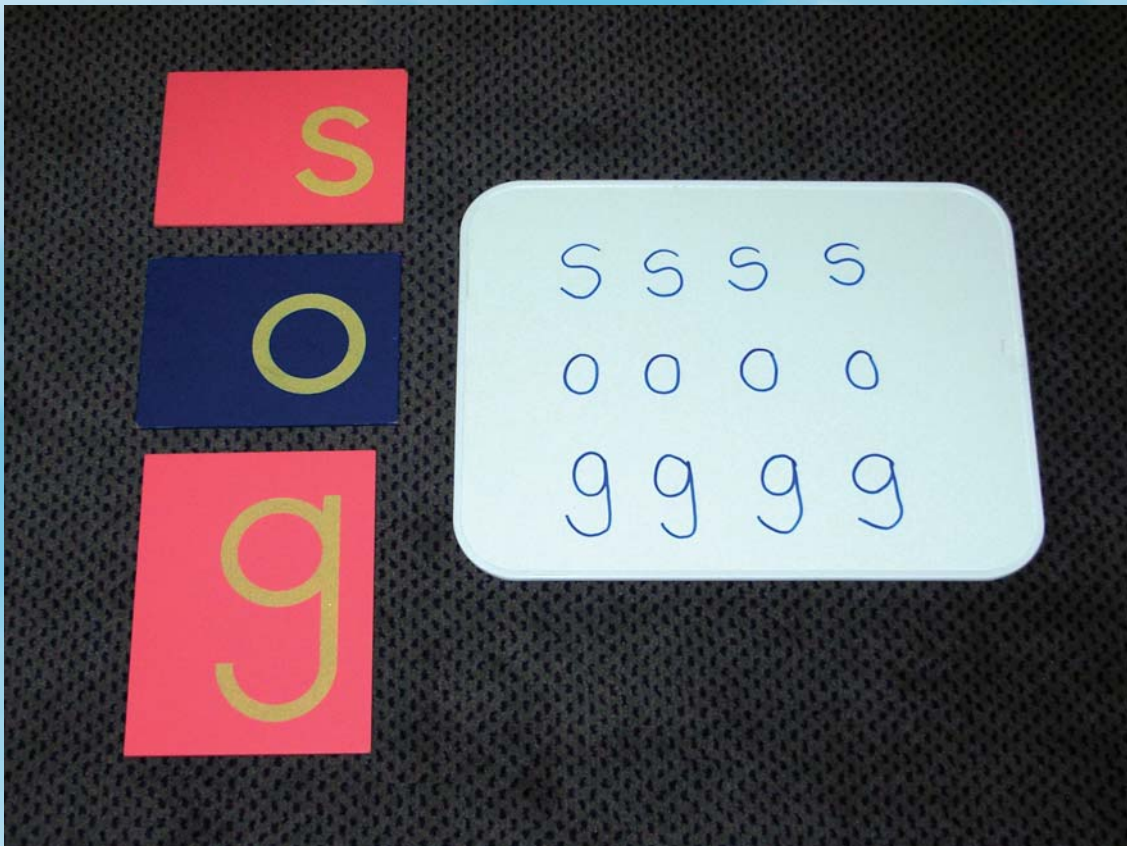
- Choose a few letters that a child has been previously introduced to.
- Position the letters on a table beside the cornmeal tray (a shallow tray with cornmeal).
- Demonstrate to the child how he can trace the letter in the cornmeal by using the primary finger of his dominant hand.

Extension 2

- After a child has been introduced to several Sandpaper Letters, carry all of them to a floor mat and ask him to review them with you.
- Repeat the Three Period Name Lesson with any letters that he cannot recall correctly.



Extension 4



Extension 5

Extension 3

- Invite a small group of children to the mat who have been introduced to some Sandpaper Letters.
- Arrange the letters face-down on the mat.
- Explain to the children how to play the “Knock-Knock Game”. Knock on one letter as you would knock on a door.
- Select a child to say, “Who is there?”
- Turn the letter over and allow the child to trace the letter and say the corresponding sound.
- Repeat for all of the face-down letters.

Extension 4

- Make playdough for the Practical Life area and show a child how to roll out long, narrow strips.
- The strips can be shaped into the letters with which the child is familiar.

Extension 5

- Take three letters at a time to a table along with a small whiteboard. The child can practice forming the letters on the board.

Extension 6

- Show the children how they can take turns tracing letters on each others’ backs and guessing which letter was formed.