

# Key Sounds

**a** as in apple  
**b** as in bat  
**c** as in cat (not circle)  
**d** as in dog  
**e** as in egg (not eagle)  
**f** as in fish  
**g** as in goat (not giraffe)  
**h** as in hat  
**i** as in ink (not ice)  
**j** as in jump  
**k** as in kitten  
**l** as in lemon  
**m** as in mom  
**n** as in nose  
**o** as in octopus (not open)  
**p** as in pot  
**q(kw)** as in queen  
**r** as in rabbit  
**s** as in sister  
**t** as in teeth  
**u** as in up (not unicorn)  
**v** as in van  
**w** as in water  
**x(ks)** as in xfox  
**y** as in yellow (not every)  
**z** as in zebra

**th** as in think  
**sh** as in shower  
**ch** as in chicken  
**qu** as in queen  
  
**oy** as in oy  
**oo** as in oo OR oock (pick one)  
**au** as in August  
**ou** as in ouse  
  
**ai** as in ai  
**ee** as in eep  
**ie** as in ie  
**oa** as in oap  
**ue** as in ue OR ue (pick one)  
  
**er** as in er  
**or** as in or  
**ar** as in ar

## How to Give a Three-Period Lesson

Eduard Seguin, a French physician and educator, developed a technique to help young children associate vocabulary with a corresponding object, symbol or concept. The presentation consists of three distinct steps and is known as a three-period lesson. The lesson gradually increases the child's awareness of the association in a gentle yet thorough manner. The sandpaper letters used in most Montessori classrooms are taught using the Seguin three-period lesson. *All three steps do not have to be presented in one sitting, in fact, they rarely are.*

When you come in to volunteer, you will present the sandpaper letters as follows:

- Work with one child at a time
- Sit on the right-hand side of the child unless you notice that he/she is left handed (in which case you will sit on the left-hand side and use your left hand to trace the letters.) This is particularly important if the child is very young.
- Tell the child you will be doing sandpaper letters together. Show him/her how you will trace the letters so gently that it will tickle your fingers.

**Period One:** Introduction to the letter: "This says..."

- Take out one letter (e.g. **m**) and place it in front of the child.
- "This says mmmm". Do not say the name of the letter ("em").
- Using two fingers, slowly trace the letter from left to right.
- "Would you like to try?"
- If the child is unable to trace on his/her own, say "Follow my fingers" and show again. Ask child to repeat the sound of the letter. Sometimes even following your finger is too difficult; you can ask him to put his fingers on yours and "ride piggy back".
- Repeat a few times.
- Turn letter over and place to the side.
- Show another letter and repeat process.
- Record this period with the first line of a triangle 

**Period Two:** Recognition "Show me..."

- After child has been presented with up to three letters, place all in a row in front of him/her.  
E.g. **s a m**
- Point to each and say the sound to remind the child of what they are.
- Say, "Show me mmmm" and wait for child to point to the letter.
- If the child chooses correctly, proceed to the next letter.
- Mix up the letters and repeat.
- If the child points to incorrect letter, tell him the correct sound for that letter then ask him to locate it.  
E.g. If you ask for m and he shows you s, point to s and say "this says ssss. Show me ssss"
- Record successful identification with the second line of the triangle. 

**Period Three:** Recall "What is..."

- After a child can successfully identify a letter when you provide the name, he/she is ready to attempt to recall the name independently.
- Line up the letters in front of the child and remind child of each letter (quick review).
- Point to a letter and ask, "What sound does this make?"
- Repeat for all the letters.
- If the child makes a mistake, go back to period one or two. E.g. You point to m and he says s. Say, "This says ssss. Show me ssss. What sound does this make?"
- Record successful recall with the third line of the triangle. 