Letter Sound ID Assessment

Adapted by Tammy Elser to promote early literacy "wins" and instructional clarity. The critical modification is in order of assessment based on frequency of use and urgency for early reading.

Rationale

Having the ability to match letters and sounds is foundational to early reading. Teachers use letter / sound identification assessments to determine what a child knows now and what to specifically teach next. Letter sounds and early words are taught in tandem and are corequisites along with actual early reading practice and literacy experiences. This assessment identifies what individual children know specifically about letter/sound identification, and their ability to think of words beginning with a given sound. Exiting preschoolers, kindergarteners and 1st graders need to be monitored for their letter / sound knowledge. Mastery is ideal at the end of Kinder or beginning of 1st grade.

Definition

Letter/sound identification is recognizing lower case and upper case letters and identifying appropriate sounds for each letter symbol.

Materials

Use the lower- and upper-case alphabet sheets with letters roughly in order of frequency. You may want to laminate the sheets. Scoring forms are provided with sound, word, name, notes. They are taught and presented lower case first to reflect higher utility in reading.

Procedure

1. Administer the assessment to individual children. The assessment area should be quiet and free from major distractions. Sit beside the child. Seat the child comfortably in front of an appropriate height flat surface, such as a child's table. Turn the alphabet sheets face down until you are ready to use them.

2. Reduce stress by sharing that this is only to help the teacher know what to teach next. At pre-emergent level, stop if the child struggles and begins to show frustration. Mark the "stop point" on the answer sheet.

3. Say to the child, "I'm going to show you some letters that represent sounds. Let's see how many you know." Then, beginning with the lowercase letters, ask the child the following 3 questions for each letter as you point to it.

    a. What sound is this?
    b. Can you think of a word that starts with (sound)?
    c. What is this letters name? or What do we call it?

4. Use a masking card to cover rows below the row the child is looking at or a cut out box to focus the child. Move across the lines from left to right as you or the child points to the letters so that the child is asked to identify the letters in random order.

5. If the child gives you a sound that is one of many correct pronunciations, but not the primary or focus sound (example, you are hoping to illicit short vs long vowel sounds, but both are correct) say, "You are right. That letter makes that sound. Can you think of another sound that letter makes?" Repeat with the upper-case letter card as time allows.

6. If a pre-emergent child is unsuccessful, remove the masking card, and ask the child to look over the letters and tell you any s/he may know. Highlight the letters used in her/his name.

7. Reassess periodically until the child demonstrates knowledge of both letter sounds and names. Observe beginning use of sounds and names in emergent reading and classroom activities.

8. Mark the answer sheet by putting a check in the "sound" column for a correct letter sound response. Check the "name" column for a correct name response. When not correct, write what the child says or if no response leave blank.

9. If the child tells you a word that begins with the letter, you may record that in the "Word" column for your own information, but it does not affect the score.

10. Score one point for any one letter sound that is acceptable for that letter. Total possible 28pts for lower case alone focused on sounds. (a and g are represented twice)

c m a t s

r i p g f

b a o h j x

v l d w g u

n e k q z y

A F K P W Z

B H O J U

C Y L Q M

D N X S I

E G R V T

sh	ch	ph

th	wh	ng