

Environmental Print Bingo

When you're driving in the car do you hear calls from the back seat, "There's Target, McDonald's, Home Depot, Toys R Us?" Does your child read the name on the box of her favorite cereal or yogurt? This is what teachers call environmental print.

Being able to read the words kids see in their everyday environment is a key step for beginning readers. It gives them an entry into a world of symbols, or letters, that make up words. You may not *love* the idea that your child can spot the McDonald's sign a mile away, but hey, at least she's reading!

You can use these logos and signs to help your child practice reading, with a cool game of homemade bingo.



What You Need:

- Construction paper
- Ads pulled from the Sunday newspaper
- Index cards
- Glue
- Hat
- Pennies for bingo markers

What You Do:

1. Think about the things your child uses and sees on a daily basis. Choosing words that are familiar to her and that she'll be able to 'read' will not only make the game more fun, but make the activity more meaningful. Remember, the goal isn't to teach your child a set of logos, but to use the things they already know to build an understanding that words have meaning. Once you have some ideas in mind, look through the Sunday paper for some words and logos that might be familiar to her. You don't have to use only brand names, you can also incorporate stop signs or other symbols that she sees on a regular basis.
2. Using construction paper, make a grid with a minimum of nine boxes to use as your Bingo board. Glue down one picture in each box. On a separate index card, write, in clear print, the word that corresponds with the 'picture word'. For example if you cut out a picture of a yield sign, write YIELD on your index card. When you're done making the game, place all of the index cards into a hat.
3. Give your child her Bingo board and a handful of pennies to use as markers. Pull the words out of the hat one at a time. First, just read the name and see if your child can locate the word on the board. If you see that she is having difficulty locating the word, show her the card with the word on it, or give her a clue. *"This word begins with an s, like sock."* Once she's located the word on her bingo board, she can place a marker on its box.
4. Once she's achieved a row, a square, or whatever else you've decided in advance constitutes BINGO, ask your child to remove her markers one at a time as she reads the words underneath. This is a great way to reinforce her reading.

When your child masters the words on her board, it's time to up the stakes! Keep things fresh by adding more words to the game. Soon, you'll have a whole set of BINGO cards, and a more and more confident reader.