

"See" the Alphabet with Your Body!

The alphabet may seem like easy pickings to us adults, but for kids, learning the alphabet in kindergarten can be daunting. We're not, of course, just talking just about chanting the alphabet—many kids can do that long before kindergarten starts—but about understanding it letter by letter.

By the end of kindergarten, teachers hope that each child can write every letter and recognize the letter sounds in the alphabet. But it's not always easy. If your child struggles with this, take heart—you're not alone! If flashcards and other visual practices seem to be wearing thin, try something new through "kinesthetic", or whole body, learning.

Kinesthetic learning is the idea that learning is done best by doing, and in this activity, your child can learn the alphabet and practice letter-writing by 'doing' movement and art.



When you're done with this activity, not only will you have a beautiful piece of modern art from your child, you'll have one more way for her to successfully master the alphabet.

What You Need:

- Large sheet of newsprint, mounted on an easel or taped to a wall.
- Tempera paint in three bright colors
- Three brushes, one for each color of paint

What You Do:

1. Start by setting up the easel, paints, and brushes.
2. Have your child stand in front of you with her back to you. Explain that, although you usually practice letters by looking at them, you're going to try something different by "seeing" letters through the wisdom of your body!
3. Explain that you're going to draw a simple letter with your finger on your child's back. Then start at the top of any letter you choose, and draw it firmly and clearly, using the child's whole back. Practice once or twice to get the feel of it; kids usually love the sensation and will ask for more.
4. Next, have your child stand in front of the easel and pick one color of paint. Ask her to paint exactly what you are drawing on her back, starting at the top of the page. Now, take a second color of paint and have her try the same letter again, but make it different from the first—either smaller or on a different part of the page, for instance.
5. Pick another letter for your child to draw, tracing it first on her back then allowing her to paint it. Continue on using more letters to create a letter collage, and watch the colors and shapes combine.
6. Once she's comfortable with letters, you can also try writing whole word messages together. You can even have your child try writing something across *your* back. See what you can "see", even with your eyes closed!