

Bake Stenciled Letter Cookies

In kindergarten, kids practice their letters and sounds endlessly, and there's good reason: to build solid early reading skills, kids need to know their letters and sounds backward and forward, automatically.

Here's a baking activity that also makes a nice gift at the holiday season. Do it with one child or a few—and, as always, enjoy those letters and sounds!

What You Need:

- Package of refrigerated cookie dough
- Rolling pin, flour and round cookie cutters
- Pack of alphabet letter stencils (choose from lots of fonts at your local craft store)
- Colored baking sugar
- Flat, sturdy cardboard
- Aluminum foil
- Plastic wrap



What You Do:

1. Help your kindergartener use the rolling pin to roll the cookie dough out onto a lightly floured surface. Use a cookie cutter to cut out as many circles as you can, and place them on cookie sheets.
2. Plan a message with your child, such as Happy Holidays, Thank You, Get Well, or You Rock! Talk over just how each word is spelled—encourage your kindergartener to sound it out as much as possible—an then write the words, for reference, in large block letters on a sheet of paper.
3. Now find each letter you'll need in your stencil sheet. Lay each letter stencil you want over a cookie, and shake colored baker's sugar over it in a generous layer. Remove the stencil, and there you go: a perfect letter outline!
4. Bake the cookies according to package instructions. While they are cooking, cut a flat "board" out of corrugated cardboard, the width of your cookies and the length of the full words you're using. Wrap it in aluminum foil.
5. When the cookies are baked and cooled, have your kindergartener sequence them correctly into the words you want on the foil cookie board. Note: this is a particularly important step—it gives your child practice in those incredibly valuable letter-sound combinations!

When you're done, you will have a bright, tasty message all spelled out...and with luck, you'll have some extras left over for a delicious snack as well.