

Effective Early Literacy Practice

Here's How, Here's Why

edited by

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The individuals described in this book are composites or real people whose situations
have been masked and are based on the authors' experiences. Names and identifying
details have been changed to protect confidentiality.

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Mr. Terry expands upon the use of the EP alphabet chart when he introduces digraphs and blends to his first-grade students. He begins by reviewing the alphabet charts in the classroom with his students. He focuses their attention on the letter *C* card and asks the students to see if all the items on the card make

Logo	Print
	STOP
	EXIT
	DANGER
	SPEED LIMIT
	RESTROOM

Figure 2.1. Logo–print match.

the same /K/ sound. As the children read the logos, they quickly realize that Chucky Cheese, Cheerios, Cheer, and Cheetos make a very unique sound: /ch/. Mr. Terry then asks them to see if these words have some letters in common. The children immediately see the *CH* digraph. Mr. Terry tells the students that the /ch/ is so special that it needs its own alphabet card. The following day, the students ceremoniously remove the *CH* words from the *C* card and pin them to the *CH* card. Two children, Charlie and Charlene, also ask if they can put their name tags on the *CH* card. Another child has brought in an empty cherry cough drop package. The students place the *CH* card directly below the *C* card. Figure 2.2 provides an example of a *C* alphabet chart without the logos. The teacher will be responsible for placing images of the logos on the chart for the students to identify.

Coke	Cheetos
Campbell's soup	Cheerios
Crunch (Nestle)	Chex

Figure 2.2. The C alphabet chart.

As the vignette with Mr. Terry illustrates, children, with the explicit and specific instruction from a knowledgeable teacher, are quickly able to build their skill in phonemic awareness and letter recognition. The easy accessibility of the EP enables the children to connect old information and expand to new concepts, in this case the *CH* digraph. Using these highly motivating and visually appealing materials creates a meaningful foundation for learning about the alphabetic principle. In addition, we have found that when teachers use EP as an instructional tool to teach letters and sounds, the print in the child's community serves as a constant reinforcement of the reading skills they are learning in school.

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