

Letter Explorers: The Play-Doh Letter Adventure!

Materials Needed:

- 1-2 containers of Play-Doh (any color)
- A few alphabet flashcards or magnetic letters (focus on 1-2 new letters and 2-3 familiar ones)
- A small, empty box (like a tissue or cereal box)
- Markers or crayons
- A picture book
- A smooth, clean surface for Play-Doh (like a placemat or tray)

Lesson Plan (20 Minutes)

1. Warm-Up: Feed the Letter Monster (3 minutes)

- **Preparation (Before the lesson):** Quickly draw a fun monster face on the box and cut a large "mouth" hole.
- **Activity:**
 1. Introduce the "Letter Monster." Say, "This is our Letter Monster, and he is very hungry for letters! Let's see what he wants to eat today."
 2. Spread out 3-4 familiar letter cards or magnetic letters.
 3. Call out a letter by its sound. For example, "The monster is hungry for the letter that makes the 'buh' sound!"
 4. Encourage your child to find the correct letter (B) and "feed" it to the monster by pushing it through the mouth hole.
 5. Repeat for a few familiar letters to build confidence and start the lesson with a fun game.

2. Main Activity: Create a Letter with Play-Doh (10 minutes)

- **Focus:** This activity is about feeling and building the shape of a letter, connecting its form to its sound in a creative way. Let's use the letter 'S' as our example.
- **Activity:**
 1. **Introduce the Letter:** Show the 'S' flashcard. Say, "This is the letter 'S'. It makes a hissing sound like a snake: ssssssss." Hiss like a snake together.
 2. **Build the Letter:** Take out the Play-Doh. Say, "Let's make some long, slithery snakes with our Play-Doh!" Guide your child to roll the dough into long "snakes."
 3. **Form the Shape:** Once you have a few Play-Doh snakes, show your child how to curve one into the shape of an 'S'. Say, "Look! If we curve our snake, it looks just like the letter 'S'!"
 4. **Creative Exploration:** Let your child create their own 'S' shapes. Don't worry about perfection! The goal is the hands-on process. You can make big 'S' letters and small 's' letters. Talk about how they look the same but are different sizes.

3. Application & Movement: Letter Safari (5 minutes)

- **Focus:** To find the target letter in the environment, reinforcing recognition in a playful, active way.
- **Activity:**

1. **Preparation:** While your child is finishing with the Play-Doh, quickly "hide" 2-3 'S' magnetic letters or flashcards around the room in easy-to-spot places (e.g., on a pillow, next to a lamp, on a chair).
2. **Go on Safari:** Say, "Let's go on a letter safari! We are looking for the sneaky letter 'S'. Can you find one?"
3. **Find and Celebrate:** Encourage your child to search the room. When they find an 'S', celebrate! Have them bring all the found letters back to a special spot. You can make the "sssss" sound each time one is found.

4. Cool-Down: Story Time Spotting (2 minutes)

- **Focus:** To calmly end the lesson by seeing the letter in a real-world context.
- **Activity:**
 1. Grab a favorite picture book.
 2. Read a page or two together. As you read, point out the target letter when you see it. For example, "Look! There's our letter 'S' in the word 'sun'!"
 3. This shows the letter has a real purpose and connects your fun activities to reading. Conclude by singing the ABC song together.

Teacher Tips for Success

- **Follow Your Child's Lead:** If they are really enjoying one activity, it's okay to spend more time there. The goal is positive exposure, not rigid adherence to the clock.
- **Focus on One Letter:** Introducing just one new letter at a time helps prevent overwhelm and allows for deeper, more playful learning.
- **Differentiation:**
 - **For extra support:** Guide your child's hands when rolling the Play-Doh or give them verbal clues during the safari ("I see an 'S' hiding on something soft!").
 - **For an extra challenge:** Ask your child to think of other things that start with the 'S' sound (sun, star, sock) or try to "write" the letter 'S' with their finger on the table.