

# Learning Letters

- 1** Get out your magnetic letter tray. Begin with letters the student already knows. “Knowing” a letter may mean she can name it, identify the sound it makes, or she knows it to be a part of a word (for example, she may know it as the first letter in a friend’s or sibling’s name).
- 2** As you teach a new letter, have the student run her finger over the magnetic letter, feeling its shape.
- 3** Identify the letter by name and talk about how the upper and lower case letter looks or doesn’t look alike.
- 4** Model the formation of the letter on the chalkboard or whiteboard. Use descriptive language as you make the letter (for example “down, up, and over the hill” for *n*).
- 5** Guide the student’s hand as she makes the letter.
- 6** Give the student verbal instructions as she writes the letter.
- 7** Have the student write the letter in a variety of places (on a chalkboard, in a sand tray, on a Water Wizard, and in the air).
- 8** Point to the letter in a storybook and refer to it by name.
- 9** Have the student move letters around on the magnetic easel. You can have her:
  - Match upper and lowercase letters.
  - Group together tall letters.
  - Group together short letters.
  - Group together letters that are alike (and have her tell you why).
  - Find a letter that looks different.
  - Find one particular letter from an array of other letters.
- 10** Speed up the response. At first finding the letters and sorting them may be slow. Gradually ask the student to find and move the letters more quickly.
- 11** It can be most unhelpful to put two letters that the student confuses side by side. Work on only one letter at a time.



*Do not spend too much time on letter learning. These activities should be done quickly and not take away from reading well-chosen books and writing stories.*