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Letter Writing Tray

A letter writing tray is a fun way to encourage little ones to practice writing. It works their fine motor skills while supporting letter knowledge. Best of all they're simple and easy to make!

What You'll Need:

A Tray – This can be any short-sided container. (For particularly messy ones a deeper box works just fine) *For extra fun, line the bottom of the tray with colorful paper.*

Examples:

- Baking sheet
- Cake or pie pan
- Shoebox lid
- Hard pencil case
- Any box cut open at the top

Sensory materials – These are the items you will fill the tray with for your little one to write in. Remember to completely cover the entire bottom of the tray. (Some items like sand, salt and glitter and scratch and irritate eyes so keep your child in sight when using these items and remind them not to rub their eyes).

Examples:

- Sand
- Salt
- Beads
- Rice
- Seeds
- Sequins
- Glitter
- Flour
- Dried Herbs

Letter cards – Simple letters drawn on pieces of paper, or even on a white board, work great. Just be sure to use both uppercase and lowercase letters.

How it works:

Once you've filled your tray with a layer of salt (or whatever sensory material you've chosen), you will need to show your child how to use the pointer finger on their dominant hand to draw letters in the salt. For children with sensory challenges a chopstick, paint brush or the eraser of an unsharpened pencil works well.

Set up the letter card where your child can see it, and with your hand guiding theirs, draw the letter in the salt. When you're finished, jiggle the tray to erase the letter and let them try on their own. Have them write the letters of their name to start, then add more letters as needed.

Variations:

Sight words - For children who have mastered their letters and are looking for a greater challenge, you can begin to introduce 2-3 letter sight words such as it, is, at, me, cat, dog, fox, mom, dad, red, bug, car, the, and so on.



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Numbers - Same as letters, except they're drawing numbers. For children who like counting, you can also have them count items in the salt to go with the number or make dots with their fingers. For an extra challenge, make cards with only dots for them to count and write the number in the salt.



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