Day 8 · 50 minutes

First Sounds: I Spy a m s t

Today: I can hear the first sound in a word and show its letter.

Sound games — 10 min

Say a word, catch its first sound; stand-up /s/ round.

SAY
Listen. Mmmelon. The first sound in melon is /m/.

Letter drill — 3 min

Small letter cards, then the capital cards; name, sound, key picture.

SAY
This is the letter m. It says /m/, like map.

New skill — 20 min

I Spy with kit cards, then First Sounds sheet rows m, s, t alone.

SAY
I spy something that starts with /m/. Mmmoon! Moon starts with /m/.

Read together — 7 min

Happy, Happy Home; start top left, finger under each word.

SAY
I start here, at the top, on the left.

Handwriting — 10 min

Say the path, trace 3, write 1 of a m s t.

SAY
a: Start just below the middle line. Circle back all the way around.

You need

- 🖨 First Sounds: a m s t
- 🖨 Handwriting: a m s t, day 8
- From the kit: a m s t letter cards, picture cards, trace pages
- Happy, Happy Home book (printed once, reused days 8-10)
- Pencil and a crayon

Quick check
Say toy, then sip; the child says each first sound (/t/, /s/).

Step by step?
Open Teach mode on your phone: it walks you through every step, with a timer.

Step by step · everything to say and do

Sound games: Catch the First Sound

10 min

Hear and say the first sound of a spoken word, with no letters.

1 Show them

Listen. Mmmelon. The first sound in melon is /m/.

Sssoap. The first sound in soap is /s/.

Tiger. That one is quick: /t/. Tiger starts with /t/.

- Stretch /m/ and /s/; say /t/ as a quick whisper, never with an uh.
- Hold up one finger each time you say the first sound.

2 Together

Say mask with me. Mmmask. First sound? /m/!

Sister. Sssister. First sound? /s/!

After. /a/ /a/ after. First sound? /a/!

- Say each word together, stretch the first sound, then say it alone with one finger up.
- Pause just before the first sound so the child says it with you.

3 Their turn

Your turn. Tummy. What is the first sound?

Sail. Animal. Moose. What is the first sound?

Stand up if it starts with /s/: silly, nose, sofa, duck.

- Say each word once and wait 3 seconds. Answers: /t/, /s/, /a/, /m/.
- Child stands for silly and sofa, stays seated for nose and duck.

Stuck? My turn: tummy, /t/. Our turn: /t/. Your turn: tummy, first sound? Letter name instead? Say: That is its name. What sound does it make?

Letter drill: a m s t

3 min

Say the name, sound and key picture for a, m, s, t, small and capital.

1 Show them

This is the letter m. It says /m/, like map.

This is the letter t. It says /t/, quick, like top.

- Hold up each kit letter card with its key picture: apple, map, sun, top.
- Hold /a/, /m/ and /s/ long; whisper /t/ quick.

2 Together

Together: letter a, /a/, apple.

Now the capital card. Capital A, /a/, apple.

- Any sound not ticked on Friday's check goes first today, as the day 5 sheet promised.
- Run all 4 together: small letter cards, then the capital cards.

3 Their turn

Your turn. Name, sound, picture.

- Shuffle and flash the small letter cards, then the capital cards. Child says name, sound and key picture.

Stuck? My turn: letter s, /s/, sun. Our turn. Your turn. If you hear tuh, say: Quick and quiet, /t/. Try again.

New skill: I Spy First Sounds

20 min

Hear the first sound of a word and match it to the letter a, m, s or t.

1 Show them

I spy something that starts with /m/. Mmmoon! Moon starts with /m/.

Turtle. Its first sound is /t/. I hold up the letter t.

Dog. /d/. That is not a, m, s or t. Back it goes.

- Lay the 4 kit letter cards in a row; spread 8 kit picture cards below them.
- Set moon under m and turtle under t; put dog back.

2 Together

Spy with me. I spy something that starts with /s/.

Sssock! Say it together: /s/, sock. Which letter? Hold it up!

Sheet, row one: ambulance, dog, ax, fish. Circle the /a/ ones.

- Spy ant, sock, mop and ten; child finds each card and holds up its letter card.
- Do row a together: circle ambulance and ax; say why dog and fish do not fit.

3 Their turn

Your turn alone: rows m, s and t.

I say each picture once. Circle the two that start with the row's sound.

Milk, bed, cake, mug. Which two start with /m/?

- Name the 4 pictures in each row once, left to right; the child circles 2.
- Check with the answer key: milk, mug; sink, saw; tie, tub.

Stuck? My turn: mmmilk, /m/. Our turn: milk, /m/. Your turn: does bed start with /m/? If stuck, stretch the word slowly and hold up one finger on the first sound.

Read together: Happy, Happy Home

7 min

Track print left to right and top to bottom, see spaces between words, and spot a m s t.

1 Show them

I start here, at the top, on the left.

My finger goes under each word: Happy. Happy. Home.

Three words, with spaces between. Home has the letter m in it.

- Read the title slowly, finger under each word, pausing on each space.
- Read each page aloud; sweep left to right, then drop to the next line.

2 Together

Show me where I start reading on this page.

Read with me. Your finger goes under each word with mine.

Turn the page. Where do we go next?

- Child puts a finger at the top left; read together, your voice leading.
- Child turns each page; stop twice to ask where to go next.

3 Their turn

Your turn. Find a letter we know: a, m, s or t.

What sound does that letter make?

Point under each word in this line while I read.

- Child finds one known letter on a page and says its sound, not the word.
- Child points under each word as you read one line; watch for the jump at spaces.

Stuck? My turn: I start at the top left and go this way. Our turn. Your turn. If the finger runs ahead, slow down: one word, one tap.

Handwriting: a m s t Review

10 min

Write small a, m, s and t with the right start and stroke order.

1 Show them

a: Start just below the middle line. Circle back all the way around.

Push up to the middle line and pull straight down. m: Start at the middle line.

Pull down. Push up, curve over, pull down. Push up, curve over, pull down.

- Pinch and flip. Write a, m, s, t big; read the s and t paths from the box.
- Start a and s just below the middle line, m on it, t near the top.

2 Together

Stand up. Write a in the air with me, big. Say the path.

Now m, s and t. Say each path with me.

Let's trace the first a on the sheet together.

- Air-write each letter with a straight arm, saying the exact path together.
- Trace the first letter in each row together, saying the path.

3 Their turn

Your turn. Trace 3, then write one alone from the green dot.

Say the path while you write.

Circle your best letter in each row.

- Child traces 3 of each letter and writes 1 alone; kit trace pages sit nearby as models.
- Watch start point, direction and the t cross on the middle line, not neatness.

Stuck? Wrong start or direction? My turn on the line, our turn hand over hand, your turn. If the grip slips, say: Pinch and flip. Then try that letter again.

Say these words as you write

a Start just below the middle line. Circle back all the way around. Push up to the middle line and pull straight down.

m Start at the middle line. Pull down. Push up, curve over, pull down. Push up, curve over, pull down.

s Start just below the middle line. Curve back, then curve forward, like a snake.

t Start near the top line. Pull straight down. Cross at the middle line: slide right.

Quick check

1. Say toy, then sip; the child says each first sound (/t/, /s/).
2. Say ask; the child says the first sound, /a/.
3. Hold up the m and t kit letter cards; the child says each sound (5 answers in all).

Got it
5 right: tomorrow do the cut-and-glue sort as written, plus a challenge: first sounds of family names.

Nearly
3 or 4 right: tomorrow add 2 minutes of I Spy with only the missed sounds (at home: just you and your child).

Not yet
0 to 2 right: tomorrow add 3 extra minutes (in class a small group, at home just you and your child): my turn, our turn, your turn with melon, soap, tiger and the letter cards.

At home in 20 minutes

1. 3 minutes: flash the kit a m s t small letter cards, then the capital cards; your child says name, sound and key picture.
2. 5 minutes: say melon, soap, tiger, tummy, sail and animal, stretching the start, and your child says each first sound.
3. 6 minutes: play I Spy with the kit picture cards, then do the First Sounds: a m s t sheet, naming each picture once.
4. 3 minutes: read Happy, Happy Home with your finger under each word; your child finds one a, m, s or t.
5. 3 minutes: on the handwriting sheet, say each path aloud while your child traces 3 and writes 1 of each letter.

Tip: Say stop sounds like /t/ as a quick whisper, never tuh, hold stretchy ones like /m/ and /s/, and if your child gives a letter name, smile and ask: That is its name; what sound does it make? From today, the extra minutes from the start-of-year check begin: Nearly gets 3 minutes with index cards on a ring, Not yet gets 5 minutes in a small group (at home, just you and your child). Black-and-white prints: the green start dot is the big dot.