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Getting Ready for School

Introduction

Welcome to Getting Ready for School, the fun way to prepare a child for classroom learning. The Getting Ready for School Program teaches skills that promote reading and math readiness using colorful, motivating lesson cards and the unique Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™. "Ace" plays 23 cool phrases and fun sound effects and his eyes glow green and red for answer reinforcement. He will even wiggle and shake for extra reinforcement. Getting Ready for School gives children a head start that can result in a love of learning throughout school and throughout life.

Here’s What’s Included in the Getting Ready for School Program

Touch and Learn Cards

The Getting Ready for School Program comes with five card sets each containing 32 colorful and motivating lessons. When used with Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™, these stimulating cards provide a fun-filled way for children to practice and learn a wide range of readiness and preschool skills. Each card set focuses on a skill:

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Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™

"Ace" adds fun and excitement to the Getting Ready for School program by giving instant feedback to each answer. Touch the dot next to a correct answer on a Touch and Learn Card and you are instantly rewarded with a cool phrase, a variety of motivating sounds, or alternating speech and sounds. Touch an incorrect answer and "Ace" gently acknowledges it with encouraging words, different sounds, or alternating speech and sounds. PLUS, his eyes glow—GREEN for correct answers and RED for incorrect answers.

Before using "Ace," insert 2 AAA batteries, following the instructions on page 23 of this guide.

Special Features

"Ace" plays 23 cool phrases and fun sounds and glows for answer reinforcement. He will even wiggle and shake for extra reinforcement.

♫ Press this 3-position button to select the type of sounds you want to hear.
Press to hear speech, sound effects, or a mix of speech and sound effects.

♫ Press this 3-position button to choose volume level: low, high, or mute (no sound).

How to Position "Ace"

"Ace" works best when he’s straight up and down. Make sure the tip of "Ace" sits flat on the surface of the answer dot as shown on the left.

Getting Ready for School Lesson Guide

This guide gives you step-by-step instructions for teaching readiness skills in easy-to-learn, easy-to-manage lessons. It tells what you will find on each Touch and Learn Card, provides guidelines for using the cards, and gives ideas for meeting a child’s learning needs.

Play and Learn Activities

A series of Play and Learn Activities, designed to reinforce each Touch and Learn Card set and skill, is also included in the Lesson Guide. These activities let the child practice skills and have fun at the same time. The easy-to-do activities are designed to be played before, during, or after using the Touch and Learn Cards.

Use these guidelines to make the best use of the Play and Learn Activities:

• Review the Play and Learn Activities for the readiness skill. Choose one that seems the most appropriate and sounds like fun.
• Plan the activity ahead of time. Gather materials and make any other necessary preparations.
• During the activity, find opportunities to offer lots of praise and encouragement.
Getting Started

Demonstrate how to use the cards and "Ace."

The Touch and Learn Cards in this kit are easy to use with just a little practice. Use Card 1 from Set One: Let’s Learn the Sound Alphabet to demonstrate how to use "Ace" with the Touch and Learn Cards. (The object of Card 1 is to choose pictures that begin with the sound of the letter A.)

1. Place "Ace" Card 1 on the table. Point to the letters (Aa) and the picture of the apple at the top of the card. Ask the child to identify them. ("A, apple") Now say the sound the letter makes. ("A makes the /a/ sound in apple.") Have the child listen carefully, repeating the sound and the word.

2. Next, point to each picture in the first row and have the child say its name (alligator, banana). Ask, "Which one begins with the sound of the letter A—/a/? Point to it." (The child should point to the alligator.)

3. Show "Ace" to the child. Press the music note (🎵) to choose "speech." Demonstrate what happens when the tip of "Ace" is pressed on the dot next to the alligator. Just like magic "Ace" glows green, and speaks a correct answer phrase. Adjust the volume level as necessary by pressing the volume button (🔊). Let the child use "Ace" to touch the correct answer.

4. Now show the child what happens when the tip of "Ace" is pressed to a dot beside an incorrect answer (banana). "Ace" glows red and speaks an incorrect answer phrase. Have the child use "Ace" to touch the dot next to the incorrect answer.

5. Complete the other rows on Card 1 together. Then let the child try it again—alone! Allow the child plenty of time to experiment with this card and get familiar with the positive and negative phrases "Ace" speaks.

6. Depending on the age and experience of your child, you may wish to demonstrate how to change "Ace" from "speech" to "sound effects" or to alternating "speech" and "sound effects" during this first lesson, or during subsequent lessons.

Work together.

Most children need guidance using the Touch and Learn Cards. Be prepared to give encouraging help if needed. Always read any directions on the card aloud. Look over the card together. Explain any unfamiliar words and make sure the child can identify all the pictures on the card before working alone.

Short daily sessions are best.

Set aside a specific period of time each day to work on Getting Ready for School lessons. Early learners have short attention spans, so limit sessions to about five to ten minutes at first. Increase learning time as the child’s skills and interest increase.

Take your time.

Begin with just a few cards from a set. As cards are mastered, set them aside. Start the next learning session by reviewing the mastered cards and then introduce some new ones. This way each session will begin with a positive tone.

Be flexible.

When a child seems to have trouble learning a new skill, take a break. Often a change in plan is in order. You may want to introduce the skill with one of the Play and Learn Activities. It always helps to review previously mastered skills, and then move on to the new skill.

Remember to offer praise.

Words of praise and encouragement are very important to a child. Look for opportunities to offer compliments, praise, and approval of efforts as well as successes. A child is motivated by achievement and self-confidence, not by criticism or disapproval.
Using the Touch and Learn Cards

Set One focuses on visual discrimination—the ability to see differences in shapes and objects. This skill must be developed before a child can begin to read. In order to read words, he must clearly see the differences in the shapes of all 26 letters of the alphabet.

**Cards 1 to 4** introduce these basic shapes—circle, square, triangle, and rectangle. Shapes are the building blocks of letters. Once a child can recognize and distinguish basic shapes, he will be able to see the differences in letters, words, and numbers.

Refer to *Demonstrate how to use the cards and "Ace"* on page 4 for directions on how to use these cards.

**Cards 5 to 8** and **Cards 11 and 12** ask the child to find the two matching shapes in each row. Here’s how to use these cards:

1. Ask the child to look at the first row of shapes. Then point to each shape and say its name (for example: “Square, square, circle”).
2. Now ask the child to use Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™ to touch the two shapes that are the same. “Ace” rewards correct answers with a cool phrase, a variety of motivating sounds, or alternating speech and sounds, PLUS a glowing green light. If the child chooses an incorrect answer, “Ace” acknowledges it with encouraging words, different sounds, or alternating speech and sounds, PLUS a glowing red light.

**Touch and Learn Tip**

Young children often have trouble keeping their attention confined to a single row. If this happens, cover up the lower rows with a piece of paper as you work on each row.

**Cards 9, 10, and 13** have the child match the first shape in a row to another shape that is the same.

**Card 14** has the child look for a basic shape in a real-life object, and then match this shape to the shape in the row.
Reading books aloud to children is one of the most important ways to ensure a child’s success in school. Children enjoy this special reading time together and it helps develop their vocabulary. Through stories, they hear new words and learn their meanings. Reading aloud also develops listening skills. When you start with simple picture books and go on to more complex books, a child learns skills to follow a simple story line. And when he sees you run your finger over the words as you read, he gets the idea that those little black squiggles represent sounds and words—a basic prereading awareness.

**Cards 15 to 20** introduce more complex shapes—heart, oval, and star. Many letters of the alphabet contain similar shapes, such as B, m, and U. Learning to distinguish these more complex shapes is the next step in learning to differentiate the letters of the alphabet.

**Cards 21 to 28** ask the child to match shapes that are the same or almost the same. This skill is important later when he has to differentiate between similar-looking letters such as p, d, and b. The child will also look for basic shapes in real-life objects and find basic shapes in pictures.

**Cards 29 to 32** teach the child to observe the patterns formed when simple shapes are placed next to each other in a row. Recognizing patterns is more difficult than recognizing simple shapes. Practice in remembering how things go together will be helpful when the child begins to work with other kinds of patterns, such as combinations of letters and numbers.

Don’t go too fast! Limit sessions to a few new cards per day. If the child has a difficult time distinguishing shapes, try some of the Play and Learn Activities that follow.

**Reading Books**

Reading books aloud to children is one of the most important ways to ensure a child’s success in school. Children enjoy this special reading time together and it helps develop their vocabulary. Through stories, they hear new words and learn their meanings. Reading aloud also develops listening skills. When you start with simple picture books and go on to more complex books, a child learns skills to follow a simple story line. And when he sees you run your finger over the words as you read, he gets the idea that those little black squiggles represent sounds and words—a basic prereading awareness.
Shapes

These activities offer more fun opportunities to learn about and practice shapes.

Searching for Shapes

Draw a circle on a sheet of paper. Let the child trace the circle with his finger. Then cut it out and hand it to him. Explain that this shape is called a circle and that you are going on a circle search around the room. If necessary, plant some items such as a paper plate, saucer, lids from margarine tubs and coffee cans, circular coaster, round mirror, etc. As the child discovers each item, write his discoveries on a sheet of paper. When the search is over, read the list to him. Talk about and compare the circles. Ask which of them were his favorites and why? Now play the game again, this time searching for other shapes: squares, triangles, rectangles, ovals.

Shape Collage

Cut circles, squares, and triangles from colored paper. Each shape should have a specific color. For example, all circles should be red, all triangles blue, and all squares yellow. You will also need a large piece of paper and a glue stick.

Mix all of the paper shapes together in a box or basket, and play a color-and-shape sorting game before beginning your collage activity. Place one circle, one square, and one triangle in front of the child. Have him reach into the box and pull out a shape. Then say, “Place this shape on the shape that matches.” Continue until all the shapes are sorted in three piles. Now let the gluing begin! Encourage him to glue the shapes wherever he wants on the big paper.

Play the sorting game again, this time cutting shapes in a variety of sizes—big circles, medium circles, small circles. Sorting shapes of different sizes is a more difficult task, so be patient!
Making Patterns

For this activity you’ll need construction paper in two colors, crayons or markers, a glue stick, scissors, and newspaper. Cut 20 small circles—about 1 inch (2.5 cm) in diameter—from one color of paper. Cut 20 squares of the same size from the other color paper. Cut strips of paper about 2 inches (5 cm) wide and 2 feet (60 cm) long from a sheet of newspaper.

Sit with the child at a table and place the newspaper strip lengthwise in front of him. Show him how to place the colored shapes on the paper strip, alternating the shapes to make a pattern. Name the shapes as you place them: “Square, circle, square, circle.” Ask him to tell you what shape comes next in the pattern.

Start a new pattern strip, this time with a more difficult pattern: circle, circle, square. Have the child continue the pattern by placing circles and squares on the strip in the circle-circle-square sequence. When he finishes his pattern, let him glue the shapes on the strip.

Increase the difficulty by suggesting different combinations of shapes and adding more shapes. For example:

- circle, circle, square, square/circle, circle, square, square
- square, square, square, circle/square, square, square, circle
- circle, square, triangle/circle, square, triangle

Then encourage the child to make up new patterns.
Colors and Patterns

Using the Touch and Learn Cards
Set Two introduces colors and color patterns. Learning to recognize colors and color patterns will further improve visual discrimination skills.

**Touch and Learn Tip**
Follow the same steps for introducing the cards in this set that you did with Set One. (See pages 4 and 5.) Remember to read all directions aloud and answer any questions the child may have.

**Cards 1 to 4** introduce three basic colors—red, blue, and yellow. The child begins on Cards 1 and 2 by matching colors that are the same. On Card 3 she must choose the pictures that are the same as the color of a crayon. Then on Card 4 she chooses the correct color for simple objects (for example, matching red with apple and yellow with banana). Learning to distinguish colors (Which are the same? Which are different?) is an important prereading skill. It trains the child to look carefully and provides preparation for distinguishing letters of the alphabet.

**Cards 5 to 8** teach the colors orange, green, and purple following the same steps used in Cards 1 to 4.

**Cards 9 and 10** teach the colors black, brown, gray, and pink.

**Cards 11 to 14** review all the colors that were taught on Cards 1 to 10. On these cards the child matches the color of a real object to the color.
Reading Color Words as Sight Words

Children can be taught to read color words as “sight words.” Sight words occur over and over in a child’s vocabulary. For most children it is easier to memorize these sight words than to read them by sounding them out. A child memorizes the patterns of letters in the written word. Memorizing whole words is a difficult skill to learn. Most children are not ready to read sight words until they have learned the letters of the alphabet. Therefore you may want to hold off teaching this skill until completing the cards in Set Five and mastering the alphabet. (See page 22.)

Cards 17 to 22 ask the child to find the two colors that are the same as those in pictures or geometric patterns. These cards will help her learn about color combinations. This skill will be helpful when the child begins to work with other kinds of combinations, such as combinations of letters and numbers.

Cards 23 to 32 teach the color words. With these cards you read the color words out loud to the child as she works through each lesson.

How to begin:

1. Start by reading each color word on the top of the card as you point to each word and the color underneath it.
2. Then look at each box together—pointing to and reading the color word to the child. For example, for the first box on Card 23 point to the red shape and say, “What color is this?” Then point to each word below as you read it, “Yellow? Red? Blue?”
3. Have the child answer out loud first and then help her find the dot next to her answer.

Don’t go too fast! Limit sessions to a few new cards per day. If the child has a difficult time recognizing colors and color patterns, try some of the Play and Learn Activities that follow.
Colors and Patterns

Here are some fun activities that will give a child more visual discrimination practice with colors and color patterns.

Color Walk
Take a “color walk” with the child. Point out the colors of objects you see on your walk: green grass, red car, yellow sign, etc. As you continue walking together, point out things that match: a red sweater and a red umbrella, a green leaf and a green dress, etc. Talk about the colors. Does she see her favorite color? What colors does she see?

Color Collage
Look through books and magazines together. Using a pair of safety scissors, have the child cut out several red (or yellow, blue, green, etc.) items. As she cuts, have her name the color. Next paste these cut-outs onto construction paper. Discuss the colors as she makes a “color collage.”

Sorting Colors
You will need a muffin tin, colored paper, and colored pompom balls. Cut circles from the colored paper to fit the bottoms of the muffin tin cups. These colors should match the pompom balls.

Place pompom balls (or other colorful sortables such as buttons or small toys) into a bowl or basket. Have the child reach into the bowl and pull out a pompom. Then have her place the pompom in the muffin tin with the matching colored circle. Continue until all the pompoms are sorted. Encourage the child to name the colors as she sorts.

Color of the Day
Celebrate the colors of the rainbow with a special week dedicated to wearing, eating, finding, and appreciating colors. Choose a different color to focus on for each day. On “red” day, have the child dress in red clothes. Eat red foods: tomato juice, apple slices, cherry gelatin, raspberry jam sandwiches. Browse through a picture dictionary looking for anything red—a barn, a fire truck, a radish.
Using the Touch and Learn Cards

Math is one of the most important subjects a child will have in school. Set Three introduces math by teaching numbers and counting.

**Cards 1 to 10** introduce the numbers one to ten, the first steps in math readiness. Here’s how to begin:

1. Ask the child to look at the first line of numbers. Then point to each number and say its name (“One, two, one”).
2. Now ask the child to use Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™ to touch the two numbers that are the same. "Ace" rewards with a cool phrase, a variety of motivating sounds, or alternating speech and sounds. Touch an incorrect answer and "Ace" gently acknowledges it with encouraging words, different sounds, or alternating speech and sounds. PLUS, his eyes glow—**GREEN** for correct answers and **RED** for incorrect answers.

**Cards 11 to 20** build counting skills. As you do each card together, first have the child name the object(s) to be counted (for example, “horses”). Then have him count them aloud (for example, “One, two—two horses.”) Now ask the child to use "Ace" to touch the correct number. Give him one card at a time and watch his progress. Separate cards that give him trouble and repeat these cards.

**Cards 21 and 22** ask the child to count objects and find the correct number. For example, have the child count the number of worms at the top of the page. (There are four worms.) Then have him find the worm at the bottom of the page and touch the correct number (4).
Reading Number Words as Sight Words

Children can be taught to read number words as “sight words.” Sight words occur over and over in a child’s vocabulary. For most children it is easier to memorize these sight words than to read them by sounding them out. The child memorizes the patterns of letters in the written word. Memorizing whole words is a difficult skill to learn. Most children are not ready to read sight words until they have learned the letters of the alphabet. Therefore you may want to hold off teaching this skill until completing the cards in Set Five and mastering the alphabet. (See page 22.)

Don’t go too fast! Limit sessions to a few new cards per day. If the child has a difficult time with numbers and counting, try some of the Play and Learn Activities that follow.
Numbers

Use these activities to help the child recognize the numbers one to ten and to practice counting.

Counting Counters
Giving the child objects to count is a great way to practice counting. Beans, crayons, craft sticks, and other small objects make good “counters.” Place a few counters in front of the child and ask, “How many?” Do this with different quantities of counters until he can easily count to ten.

Number Tubs
This activity will help the child learn the relationship between quantities of things and numerals.

You’ll need:
• 10 clean margarine tubs with lids or other small plastic containers
• at least 55 pennies
• a permanent marker

Here’s what to do:
1. With the marker, print a numeral (1 through 10) on each plastic container and its lid.
2. Using the pennies, help the child count and place the correct number of coins into the marked tubs.
3. Encourage him to fasten the lid onto each tub and then shake it vigorously. The more pennies in the tub, the louder its sound.

*Safety Note: Always supervise children when they are handling coins, as they may be swallowed and pose a choking hazard.
Number-Word Cards
Here’s an activity that teaches numbers and counting.

You’ll need:
• 10 index cards or blank strips of paper
• small objects or counters

Here’s what to do:
1. Write a number (from 1 to 10) in the left corner of the card and its corresponding number word in the right corner.
2. Give the child objects to count.
3. Place the “1” card in front of the child and ask him to place one counter on the card. Do the same with all the cards.

Advanced Activity:
When the child can count from 1 to 10, collect and shuffle the cards. Place the cards face down on the table. Have the child turn over the top card, read the number, and place that number of counters on the card.

*Safety Note: Always supervise children when they are handling small objects, as they may be swallowed and pose a choking hazard.

“I’m So Hungry” Numbers Game
This number game is simple and silly, but a great way to practice counting. Say the phrase, “I’m so hungry I could eat . . .” followed by a number and a favorite food. Then take turns saying the phrase, until you reach the number ten. For example:
Adult: “I’m so hungry I could eat one watermelon.”
Child: “I’m so hungry I could eat two pizzas.”
Learning the Alphabet

Using the Touch and Learn Cards
Set Four teaches letter recognition. Before a child can recognize groups of letters as words, she must be able to distinguish individual letters. This is not as easy as it may seem! Remember, the letters we know so well may look like meaningless scribbles to a young child. And many letters look very much alike. It’s not always easy for a child to see that b and d are different. It takes time and practice.

Cards 1 to 26 introduce each letter of the alphabet in both uppercase and lowercase form. To use these cards follow these steps:
1. Place Card 1 on the table. Ask the child to point to the big letters at the top of the page as you say their name. (“A”)
2. Ask the child to name the picture. (“apple”)
3. Now have the child look at the first row of letters. Point to the first letter and say, “This is uppercase A. Use “Ace” to touch the other uppercase A’s in this row.”
4. The next row shows the lowercase a. Point to the first letter and say, “This is lowercase a. Use “Ace” to touch the other lowercase a’s in this row.”

Cards 27 to 32 ask the child to match an uppercase and lowercase letter pair to individual uppercase and lowercase letters.

Don’t go too fast! Limit sessions to a few new cards per day. If the child has a difficult time with letter recognition and the alphabet, try some of the Play and Learn Activities that follow.

Touch and Learn Tip
Although Ace—the Talking, Teaching Dog™ gives a congratulatory response when a correct answer is chosen, don’t forget to give your own special words of praise.
The Alphabet

Children will learn and practice the letters of the alphabet with these entertaining activities.

**ABC Song**

Sing the “ABC Song” together. Write the alphabet on a sheet of paper. Point to the letters one at a time as you sing their names. Encourage the child to sing and point with you.

**Circle the Letter**

Write several different letters on a sheet of paper. Give this paper and a crayon to the child. Now write one of those letters again on another sheet of paper. Hold it up so the child can see it. Tell her to circle the same letter on her paper. Do the same until all the letters on her paper are circled. Check her work as you go along. Do this activity for both uppercase and lowercase letters.

Tip: A chalkboard or write-on/wipe-off board can be fun to use instead of paper.

**Letter Sorting**

Sorting letters is a great way to practice letter recognition. All you need are some paper plates and letters from alphabet cereal or pasta.

1. Choose two letters to practice (for example, M and N).
2. Get two paper plates and write one of the letters to be sorted on each. For example, write an M on one plate and an N on the other. (Letters can be written on self-stick notes so the plates can be reused.)
3. Pick out several of each of the letters you are practicing from the cereal or pasta letters. Spread them on the table.
4. Give the child one letter at a time and ask her to place it in the plate with the matching letter. As she places the letter on the plate (letter M in plate M), have her say the letter out loud: “This is M.”
**Letter Hunt**

Write letters on small self-stick notes (one letter per note). You’ll want to mix your letters (for example, 10 X’s, 10 Y’s, 10 Z’s). Place these notes all around the room—on tables, chairs, toys, books. Then send the child on a search for notes showing a specific letter. For example, say: “Bring back all the X notes.”

**Touchable Letters**

Tracing letters helps children get the “feel” of printing without the added task of holding a pencil or crayon. Use chalk to print letters on a chalkboard or on anything textured—pieces of sandpaper, felt, carpet, velvet. Choose one letter and print it several times across the surface. Using your fingers, demonstrate how to trace on top of each letter. Now have the child trace the letters using the index and middle fingers of her dominant hand. Encourage her to trace the letters, moving her fingers from top to bottom, left to right. Ask her to say the name of the letter as she traces it. Add more letters as the child’s skill increases.
Using the Touch and Learn Cards

SET FIVE

Uppercase and Lowercase Letters

Set Five teaches uppercase and lowercase letters. Learning to read includes understanding that all letters of the alphabet have both an uppercase and lowercase form. A child must know that A and a are the same letter, that B and b are the same letter, that C and c are the same letter, and so on.

Before using the cards in this set, tell the child that it is important to learn which uppercase and lowercase letters “go” together. Explain that uppercase letters are used at the beginning of names and at the beginning of sentences. Write the child’s name on a piece of paper using uppercase and lowercase letters (Ben, Maria, Alex). Ask him to circle the uppercase letter at the beginning of his name. Then have him underline all the lowercase letters in the rest of his name. Repeat this with several other names.

Cards 1 to 28 ask the child to match uppercase and lowercase letters.

Here’s how to begin using these cards:

1. Place Card 1 on the table. Have the child point to the letter at the top of the box and say its name. (“This is an uppercase A.”)

2. Now have the child look at the two letters written below and say, ”Use “Ace” to touch the lowercase a.”

Cards 29 to 32 ask the child to choose the pair of letters inside a box that are correctly matched uppercase and lowercase letters.

Don’t go too fast! Limit sessions to a few new cards per day. If the child has a difficult time with uppercase and lowercase letters, try some of the Play and Learn Activities that follow.
Uppercase and Lowercase Letters

These activities provide a fun way to learn and practice uppercase and lowercase letters.

My Alphabet Book

To create a custom uppercase and lowercase alphabet book you will need:
• 27 sheets of paper
• paper hole punch
• glue or glue stick
• brads, yarn, or string
• child’s safety scissors
• old magazines, newspapers, and advertisements

Draw a line down the middle of a sheet of paper. On the top of one half of the sheet write an uppercase letter A. On top of the other half of the sheet write the lowercase letter a. Look through magazines, newspapers, and advertisements together circling large-sized uppercase A’s and underlining lowercase a’s. Then cut out at least 10 of each. Use glue or a glue stick to attach the cut-out uppercase A’s to the half of the paper with the uppercase A printed on it and the lowercase a’s to the half of the paper with the lowercase a printed on it. This is the first page of the Alphabet Book.

Repeat the same steps for the remaining letters of the alphabet. This project will take days or weeks to complete, so take your time to ensure that it remains an enjoyable activity. When the child has completed a page for each uppercase and lowercase letter, have him make a cover, punch holes in the pages, and bind them together using brads, yarn, or string.
Alphabet Card Match-up
Make a matching alphabet card set. You will need 52 index cards. On one card write an uppercase A. On another write a lowercase a. Do this for each letter of the alphabet. Mix up the cards and ask the child to make letter pairs. Begin with only a few pairs (A/a and B/b) at first. Later, you can give the child the whole alphabet.

Sorting Uppercase and Lowercase Letters
1. Spread the matching alphabet card set that you made for the Alphabet Card Match-up activity on the table.
2. Get two paper plates. Draw a big happy face on one and a smaller happy face on the other.
3. Have the child sort the letters by putting all uppercase letter cards on the plate with the big happy face and all lowercase letter cards on the plate with the little happy face.
4. Encourage the child to name each letter as he drops it onto a plate.

Alphabet Concentration
Use the matching alphabet card set (from the Alphabet Card Match-up activity) to play this game. Choose four pairs of matching uppercase and lowercase letters. For example, A/a, B/b, C/c, and D/d. Place the uppercase letter cards face up in two rows of two cards per row. Now make a similar random arrangement of the lowercase letters face down. The child chooses a face-down card, turns it face up, and then tries to find its letter match (example: A and a). Continue this way until all pairs are matched. Add more pairs of letters as the child becomes familiar with the game.
Sight Words

The best way to teach reading is by using both the phonics method (sounding out the letters in a word) and the sight word method. In the sight word method a child learns to read a word by memorizing the pattern of written letters, rather than by sounding out each letter in the word. Words that frequently appear in a child’s vocabulary, such as color words and number words, are easier to learn to read as sight words.

Now that Set Five has been completed and the alphabet has been mastered, you may want to introduce color words and number words as sight words if you feel that the child is ready. Go back and work with Cards 23 to 32 from Set Two and Cards 23 to 32 from Set Three again. This time, do not read the words to the child. Instead let her read the sight words to choose the answers.

Repetition is the key to mastering sight words. Make flash cards to help the child memorize these words. For example, write a color word on an index card and then let the child color the card that color. Or write a number word on a card and let the child put that number of stickers on the card. Let the child keep the cards and encourage her to read them often.

Playing games with flash cards is also a good way to practice. For example, ask the child to match each color word flash card with an object in the room of the same color. Or show the child a number word flash card and ask her to bring that number of objects to you.

Memorizing whole words is a difficult skill to learn at first. Give the child lots of praise and encouragement.

Congratulations!

Now that you have completed all five Touch and Learn Card Sets along with the Play and Learn Activities, you have given a child a giant head start to school readiness. You can continue to help a child develop and reinforce these readiness skills in several ways:

• Continue to play with the Touch and Learn Cards and the Play and Learn Activities. Children love to feel successful, and by repeating the cards and activities the child will have the opportunity to succeed with previously mastered material.

• Read stories aloud to the child. By reading aloud you help develop a child’s vocabulary, listening skills, prereading awareness, and imagination.

• Make regular visits to the library with the child. Help her find books that interest her.

• Be generous with praise and encouragement for all learning efforts. With your positive attitude, the child’s interest in learning and reading will continue to grow.
Caring for “Ace”—the Talking, Teaching Dog™

How to Install and Replace the Batteries

“Ace” requires 2 AAA batteries, not included. To install the batteries, use a coin to unscrew the battery door on back of the “Ace.” Turn coin in a counterclockwise motion until door opens. Install 2 fresh AAA batteries as shown in the diagram. Replace door. Use coin to tighten the door. Turn in a clockwise motion until door is secure.

- Do not mix alkaline, standard (carbon-zinc), or rechargeable (nickel-cadmium) batteries.
- Do not mix old and new batteries.

Cleaning Instructions

Clean “Ace” with a damp or dry cloth. Do not immerse or spray liquid or water on “Ace.”

Troubleshooting

If “Ace” does not work the first time you use it:
- Make sure you have installed the 2 AAA batteries.

If “Ace” does not work after using it successfully:
- Take out the batteries and reinsert them, making sure that they are sitting properly inside the battery compartment.
- Install fresh batteries.
- Make sure the battery door is tightly secured.

If “Ace” still does not work:
- Make sure “Ace’s” tip is held straight up and down and is touching the center of the answer dot.