**Magnetic Letters Activities**

**Visual Discrimination** is the ability to differentiate similarly shaped objects, and is an important early reading skill. For example, children must be able to see the differences between E and F or C and G before beginning the process of learning letter names and sounds.

**How to practice it:**

* Have your child sort magnetic letters into three groups according to how they are formed –straight lines, curved lines or both curved and straight lines –to help him focus on the similarities and differences in letters.
* The same objective can be achieved by purchasing two sets of letters and asking your child to match pairs of the same letter.
* Play a game of I Spy in which your child picks the letters in his or her name from all of the alphabet letters!

**Beginning Sound Awareness** is the ability to recognize the first sound in a word. Hearing the first sound in a word is a component of phonemic awareness, the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in words, and one of the best predictors of reading success in young children.

**How to practice it:**

* Play a game of Go Fish with a fishing pole created by attaching a wooden spoon or ruler to one end of a piece of string, and a large paperclip to the other end. Spread the letters on the floor (a few at a time if they are just beginning to work on this skill), and have your child “fish” for a letter. Once a letter has been caught (the paper clip will attach itself to the magnet on the letter), your child can name the letter and the sound it makes and think of one or two words that begin with that letter.
* Give your child three letters and send her on a hunt for objects that begin with that letter from around the house. Set the timer to make it more challenging!

These ideas will help your put your magnetic letters to good use by building a foundation for literacy success for your little learner. These skills do not come naturally to children, but repeated exposure and playful practice will produce long term benefits as a child begins to read. The possibilities for practice are endless, so once you have tried these tips out, get creative for added alphabet practice!