

WORKING WITH LETTERS AND SOUNDS WITH STUDENTS WITH CVI AND PHYSICAL DISABILITY

Student knows: Less than 50% of the alphabet Across the Week

2 letters of the week	Targeting two letters that look and sound different e.g. C and T. Focus on the letter names but also mention the most common letter sound during activities.
Letter songs	Can use both single letter songs and whole alphabet songs. But remember that these don't have a big impact on alphabet knowledge – even though they engage students.
Letter books	Both single letter books and multiple letter books. Lots available at Monarch Reader , which has high contrast settings while viewing on website.
Letter activities	Lots of different and diverse ones. Some of these should support students to experience the shape of the letter e.g. feeling around a sandpaper letter. Check out this link for ideas , although not all of them are suitable for the students that are the focus of this handout.
Letter sorts	Start with visual + auditory letter sorts with the two letters of the week, where the focus is on a student discriminating visually between the two letters. We would consistently talk about each letter by its name during these activities. Once a student can do this successfully then we would move to letter sorts visually only – where we aren't labelling the letter out loud for the student. See the handout on using sorts. Letter sorts should only happen on Thursday and Friday. Download this handout for more information on sorts.
Whole alphabet activities	Students have an opportunity to interact with the whole alphabet at least once a week e.g. alphabet jigsaw, playing with magnetic letters. During this, an adult needs to be around talking about the letters and giving them some context. For example "oh, you just found a D, That's the first letter in Dad".



**For more activity ideas see
[Teaching the Alphabet with Variety](#)**

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Example of a Weekly Program

Monday	• Present the first letter of the week on a black carpet board, upper case only. Use a brightly coloured wooden letter. Use hand-under-hand to support student(s) to feel the shape of the letter. Talk about the letter name and the letter sound. • Play a letter song for the letter. • Write a very large version of the first letter of the week outside using chalk. Use a bright coloured chalk on a dark surface if possible. Now, support the student to experience the shape of the letter by moving around it. If possible, keep the brightly coloured wooden letter nearby to support them to understand that they are both the same letter. • Explore their communication system and find some words that start with the letter. • Use a letter construction set to build the letter in front of them. Remind them that they will need to build the letter later in the week – so they need to pay attention! Talk about the letter as you build it – referencing the pieces you need and the shape, for example “I need a short, straight piece”.
Tuesday	• Present the second letter of the week on a black carpet board, upper case only. Use a brightly coloured wooden letter. Use hand-under-hand to support student(s) to feel the shape of the letter. • Play a letter song for the letter. • Write a very large version of the second letter of the week outside using chalk. Use a bright coloured chalk on a dark surface if possible. Now, support the student to experience the shape of the letter by moving around it. If possible, keep the brightly coloured wooden letter nearby to support them to understand that they are both the same letter. • Explore their communication system and find some words that start with the letter. • Use a letter construction set to build the letter in front of them. Remind them that they will need to build the letter later in the week – so they need to pay attention! Talk about the letter as you build it – referencing the pieces you need and the shape.



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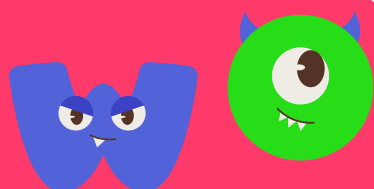
Example of a Weekly Program

Wednesday

- Present the sandpaper versions of both letters of the week, upper case only. Point out similarities and differences. Use hand under hand to support them to feel the shape of the letters.
- Read a high contrast letter book for each letter of the week. As you read each book, have a high contrast version of the letter available. (Please introduce a different brightly coloured letter where possible – this could be a printed glow letter. We don't want students to think that a letter is always the same – because they vary a lot in size, colours and fonts!)
- As you read each book, talk about the two letters. Find the letter in the book and show the student how it is the same letter. Start modelling making a decision about which of the two letters is the one for the book. Point out if you see the other letter of the week in the other book.
- Make the two letters of the week in front of the student using a letter construction set. After making the first one, using just the pieces that make the letter, get the student to decide which piece to put where to remake the letter themselves. You can have a model letter available for them to look at. Do the same process for the second letter. They can use partner assisted scanning to select the pieces in order they want to use and the position they go in.



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Thursday	• Remind the student of the two letters of the week using either the wooden letters or sandpaper letters. • Have several versions of each letter ready to go for use in a sort. Use high contrast letter sorts. You can download high contrast letter sorts sheets from this link. Use the upper case letters to start with. You can have two different boxes with the letters displayed on them – or just two different mats, one for each letter. Get the student to eye gaze at the target, or use partner assisted scanning. • Once you've finished the letter sort, then get the letter construction kit and get the student to build one of the two letters of the week. Deliberately offer them some pieces that can't be used to build the focus letter – and get them to use partner assisted scanning to select which pieces they want to use. • Finish by getting them to use their writing tool to write the letter. Start on the page that has the letter on it – and again get them to use partner assisted scanning to select the letter for you to write.
Friday	• Repeat the activities from Thursday. For the letter construction and letter writing, focus on the other letter of the week. • Finish by reviewing the two letters of the week again, using either the wooden letters or sandpaper letters.

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