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Kindergarten
Phonemic Awareness, Handwriting



CCLS Standards ELA: print concepts, phonemic awareness, vocabulary acquisition

LetterSchool by Sanoma Media Netherlands B.V. Free or full version \$2.99
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/letterschool/id435476174?mt=8>

LetterSchool is a fabulous letter and number writing app recommended for ages 3-7. The graphics and animations are bright and entertaining and keep the students engaged while they are learning. What makes this app terrific is the varied animations that go along with each letter. Children are fascinated by a steam train running along the tracks, a lawn mower cutting the grass, or a rocket ship shooting off to the stars as they trace their letters. Students can trace uppercase or lowercase letters and numbers with starting points, with a tracing guide and then independently. Letter tracing can be completed with a stylus or finger. Students earn stars for each letter completed and the independent writing level is done on a very realistic chalk board. Adults can choose Zaner-Bloser, HWT or D'Nealian style for the handwriting style. Resetting the app to the beginning and storing progress for up to three players are additional settings. *LetterSchool makes handwriting cool*, the app very rightly claims on the opening screen. This app has won many awards and reached the TOP 10 App Store's Education Category (iPad) in approximately 40 countries.

This app keeps students actively learning and engaged and they can use it easily on their own. LetterSchool reinforces letter names, letter sounds, proper letter and number formation, vocabulary and word recognition, all important skills for young kindergarten students. As each letter is introduced, the letter name, sound and a corresponding word and picture are shown, reinforcing phonics and spelling skills. During tracing, if the student strays off the line, they restart the letter so that it is formed correctly. Using a stylus while tracing helps reinforce proper pencil grip; my students enjoy using a crayon style stylus with a tripod grip. Students with fine motor delays improve their eye-hand coordination and muscle control. Since kindergarten students are learning many new skills, independence is an important learning skill to develop. Students are able to take off with this app at an independent learning center allowing the teacher to focus on small group instruction. My kindergarten students never tire of this app, it holds their attention and keeps them writing, often longer than they would using paper and pencil. This is a wonderful writing and phonics activity to reinforce letter formation and phonemic awareness.