



Literacy

Our literacy focus over the next couple of months will be developing our phonological awareness skills.

What is phonological awareness?

Phonological awareness is when children tune into the sounds of spoken words. Children first begin to develop their phonological awareness skills when they are able to identify rhyming words and count the number of syllables in a name. The early stages of phonological awareness also involve noticing how sounds repeat themselves (alliteration). For example, Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers,

Later, phonological awareness moves from noticing to doing. Children will begin to generate their own rhyming words, and they can break words apart into syllables without having to clap them out.

A later stage of phonological awareness is called phonemic awareness. This is when children tune into individual sounds (phonemes) in a word. It includes the ability to separate a word into the sounds that make it up and to blend the single sounds to read.

Ways to develop phonological awareness at home

Rhyming and syllables

- **Singing nursery rhymes and rhyming songs:** Once your child is familiar with the rhymes, encourage them to fill in the missing rhyming word while you sing, e.g Twinkle twinkle little **star**, how I wonder what you _____.
- **Reading rhyming books** – Once your child is familiar with the story, encourage them to fill in the missing rhyming word while you read, e.g A mouse took a stroll through the deep dark **wood**. A fox saw the mouse, and the mouse looked _____. (from the Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson).
- **Playing 'I Spy' with rhymes:** For example, 'I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with bear.'
- **Silly Rhymes:** Encouraging child to make up silly rhymes with you, e.g The **dog** and the **frog** sat on the **log**. The boy lost his **sock** under the **clock**. The **king** dropped his **ring** when he was on the **swing**.
- **Rhyming Box:** Create a rhyming box/bag at home with rhyming household objects or pictures. Ask your child to find the matching rhyming object. Once your child is familiar with the concept of rhyme, you could challenge them to think of their own rhyming word to match an object/picture.

- **Rhyme Challenge** Rhyme Challenge is an easy game that can be played anywhere. For Rhyme Challenge, one person chooses a word and says, *I challenge you to think of as many rhymes as you can for "cat" (or any word).* And the next player says as many words as he can that rhyme with that word. It can be helpful to try to model saying the given word with the rhyming word. (*Cat, bat. Cat, hat. Cat, mat. . .*)
- **Roll a Rhyme:** One person chooses a word then while rolling or throwing a ball between you think of as many rhyming words as you can.
- **Syllable game:** Adult selects a word, breaks it up, and keeps repeating in bits (not individual sounds). For example black/bird/black/bird/black/bird..... Once the child hears this pattern, then the adult stops and allows the child to fill in the missing bit. This game works particularly well with longer words such as en/or/mous, fa/bu/lous.
- **Syllable game:** A body place for each syllable! Get the child to use their two hands and to touch their heads for the first syllable, their shoulders for the second syllable, their hips for the third, knees for the fourth, toes for the fifth and heels if there is a sixth syllable! Children love this and they naturally experiment with any new words they hear.

Beginning Letter Sounds

- **Mystery Bag:** Place three objects beginning with the same letter in a bag (such as ball, bug, and button for B). Have your child take each item out of the bag and name each item. Encourage your child to guess the “mystery letter”.
- **I Spy Game:** ‘I spy something beginning with a...’ using the letter sound when you are out and about.
- **Sound Hunt:** Find objects around the house that start with a given letter.
- **Odd-one Out:** Say a number of words, all but one of which begin with the same sound. See if your child can pick out the odd one. It can be helpful to have the corresponding pictures or the objects there for the child to look at.