Phonological Awareness

To understand a spoken language, a child must be able to hear the different sounds and parts of the words that make up the language. By playing with words, children develop phonological awareness. Most children who have phonological awareness have an easier time learning to read.

Here’s what you can do:

- Help your pre-reader become aware of the smaller sounds that make up words by learning nursery rhymes and making up your own silly, nonsense rhymes together.

- Ask whether two words rhyme: “Do ‘cat’ and ‘hat’ sound alike?” “Do ‘cat’ and ‘dog’ rhyme?”

- Sing songs with your child every day. Songs naturally break words into syllables and are a fun way to learn about word sounds.

- Play “I Spy” with rhymes. “I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with ‘far’ (car).” Let your child make up rhymes and have you guess, too.

- Put two words together to make a new word: “What word would we have if we put ‘cow’ and ‘boy’ together?”

- Leave out the last rhyming word. For example: Twinkle, twinkle little star, How I wonder what you _____, (are). Do this with other nursery rhymes, poems and songs that your child knows by heart.

- Say rhymes and sing songs in the language most comfortable for you.

More great books to help your child play with words:

(Birth to 2 years)
- The Real Mother Goose, pictures by Blanche Fisher Wright
- Up, Down and Around, by Katherine Ayers
- The Pout-Pout Fish, by Deborah Diesen

(3 to 5 years)
- Tanka Tanka Skunk, by Steve Webb
- Mouse Mess, by Linnea Asplind
- Fox in Socks, by Dr. Seuss

(Grades K-1)
- Take Me Out of the Bathtub and Smelly Locker: Silly Dilly School Songs, by Alan Katz
- Bebé Goes to the Beach, by Susan Middleton Elya
More fun with *Llama, Llama, Red Pajama*...

**Rhyme Time**… Choose two words from one of the rhymes in the book, such as drink and sink. Say them several times with your child and explain that these words rhyme, they sound alike. Help your child think of other real and nonsense words that rhyme with drink and sink (link, kink, pink, dink).

**Music and Movement**… Put some rhythm into these rhymes! Bounce, clap, tap, stomp, drum, jump, snap… Giving each part of the word a beat will help your young child learn to break words into syllables.

Clap = 1 syllable
Happy = 2 syllables
Excited = 3 syllables

**Out and About**… Play “Secret Word” in the car, doctor’s office, in line at the store, etc. Think of a word, then say a word that rhymes with the secret word (it sounds like ‘hook’). Have your child guess the word. You can give hints (we read this each night).

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**Song for Rhyming Practice**
*(to the tune of Skip to My Lou)*

Drink, sink, these words rhyme
Drink, sink, these words rhyme
Drink, sink, these words rhyme
So rhyme along with me.

What’s another word that rhymes with drink?
(Substitute their word for “sink” and re-sing the song. Do as many times as you like.)