Playing with Words

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?”
- Begin pointing out beginning sounds of words. “What sound do you hear at the beginning of ‘mom’? That’s right, m-m-m.”
- Leave out the last rhyming word. “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 that is most comfortable for you.

Book of the Month

**Llama Llama Mad at Mama**, by Anna Dewdney

Little Llama wants to play, but Saturday is shopping day. Trying on clothes, long lines, and sitting in the cart are finally too much for the little shopper, and he melts down in a llama drama. Young children and parents will see themselves in this story, and the rhyming text makes the story fun to read over and over again.

**More Llama Llama books:**

- Mouse Mess, Linnea Asplind
- Chicken Cheeks, Michael Ian Black
- Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp, Carol Diggory Shields
- The Pout Pout Fish, Deborah Diesen
- Rhyming Dust Bunnies, Jan Thomas
- Down by the Station, Will Hillenbrand

Some good books to help your child play with words...

- Rhyming books
- Dr. Seuss books
- Mother Goose Nursery Rhyme books
- Books that illustrate a familiar song
- Books with a rhythm or beat

Some favorites...

- Rhyming Dust Bunnies, Jan Thomas
- Down by the Station, Will Hillenbrand

February 2011
More fun with *Llama Llama Mad at Mama*

*Nursery Rhyme*

Nursery rhymes are a simple and easy way to help your child build rhyming skills. Research suggests that children who know lots of nursery rhymes before they begin school tend to find more success with learning to read. You can find books of nursery rhymes at your local library.

**To Market, To Market**

To market, to market, to buy a fat pig;  
Home again, home again, jiggety jig.

To market, to market, to buy a fat hog;  
Home again, home again, jiggety jog.

To market, to market, to buy a white cake;  
Home again, home again, never was baked.

To market, to market, to buy a plum bun:  
Home again, home again, market is done.

**To see more ideas or read in Spanish, visit www.colorincolorado.org/article/31497**

**On-line Resources**

Here are some websites that can help your preschool child develop phonological awareness:

- **Starfall**– Lots of pre-reading activities:  
  www.starfall.com

- **Reading is Fundamental**– Parent "how to" videos, activities for kids, bilingual:  
  www.rif.org/leadingtoreading/en/

- **Reggie the Rhyming Rhino**:  
  http://teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bll/reggie/home/index.htm

- **Mother Goose Club**– Rhymes, songs, videos, and activities:  
  www.mothergooseclub.com

- **KIDiddles**– Words and tunes to lots of favorite children's songs:  
  www.kididdles.com/lyrics

**Funding for this project is made possible by the Idaho Commission for Libraries' Read to Me program, and the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under a provision of the Library Services and Technology Act.**

Printed 2011