Playing with Words

Some words rhyme, and some words begin with the same sound. Sentences are made up of words, and words can be broken down into smaller parts. Children who begin to notice these things are developing **phonological awareness**, which means being able to hear and work with the sounds in a spoken language.

Research shows that children who have phonological awareness tend to have an easier time learning to read.

Here’s what you can do at home:

- 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.
- Point out sentences where all the words begin with the same letter (The fat frog fell on Friday).
- Put two words together to make a new word: “What word would we have if we put ‘cow’ and ‘boy’ together?”
- Take words apart. “What little words do you hear in ‘hotdog’?
- Leave out the last rhyming word: Twinkle, twinkle, little star, How I wonder what you _____, (are). Do this with other 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

*Rhyming Dust Bunnies, by Jan Thomas*

Dust bunnies Ed, Ned, and Ted are great at rhyming, but Bob… not so much. Does Bob really not know how to rhyme, or is he trying to tell us something?

More Jan Thomas books to make your child giggle:

And many more!

Books to play with words…

- Rhyming books
- Dr. Seuss books
- Books that illustrate a familiar song
- Books with a rhythm or beat
- Books with words that begin with the same sound (wokka-wokka; chicken cheeks)

Some favorites…

- *How Do You Wokka-Wokka?* Elizabeth Bluemle
- *Chicken Cheeks*, Michael Ian Black
- *Miss Mary Mack*, Mary Ann Hoberman
- *Big Chickens Fly the Coop*, Leslie Helakoski
- *How Do Dinosaurs Say Goodnight?* Jane Yolen
- *Green Eggs and Ham*, Dr. Seuss
More fun with *Rhyming Dust Bunnies*

**Rhyme time...** Re-read one of the pages together. What other words can you think of that rhyme with ___ (the three rhyming words)?

**Arts and crafts...** Make a set of rhyming dust bunnies together. Use colored pom poms, rolled up old socks, play dough, or felt pieces. Glue on "googly" eyes. Help your child re-tell the story.

**Ask a librarian...** "What exactly *is* a dust bunny?" Librarians can help find the answers to all kinds of questions. Visit your library in person or online to find the answer!

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**Word Play On-line**

Here are some websites that can help your kindergartener play with words and build phonological awareness:

- **PBS Kids**
- **Between the Lions:** pbskids.org/lions/index.html
- **Games:** The Quiet Machine, Arty’s Smarty Doors, Dub Cubs, Monkey Match, Theo’s Puzzles, Blending Bowl, Chicken Stackers, Fuzzy Lion Ears
- **Scholastic**
  - **Clifford’s Sound Game:** teacher.scholastic.com/clifford1/flash/phonics/index.htm
  - **Reggie the Rhyming Rhino:** teacher.scholastic.com/activities/bll/reggie/home/index.htm

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**What your library can do for you...**

Don't have access to a computer? Most libraries do not require a library card in order to use the computers. Some even offer free computer classes.

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**Song to Sing with Your Child**

*Down by the Bay*

Down by the bay
Where the watermelons grow,
Back to my home
I dare not go.
For if I do,
My mother will say,
"Did you ever see a bear
Combing his hair,
Down by the bay?"

*Repeat, adding different rhymes each time:*

Did you ever see a bee
With a sunburned knee...

Did you ever see a whale
With a polka dot tail...

Now add some of your own rhymes!

- Did you ever see a cat, _____________
- Did you ever see a bug, _____________
- Did you ever see a dog, _____________

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