**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**

*Miss Mary Mack*, adapted by Mary Ann Hoberman, illustrated by Nadine Westcott

This version of the well-known song and playground game is filled with new verses and great illustrations that will have your child clapping and singing along in no time. Read along as Mary Mack makes friends with the elephant and places her "silver buttons, buttons, buttons/ Down his nose, nose, nose."

Award-winning author Mary Ann Hoberman has written lots of books—look for more of her books at your local library!

**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

*Saturday Night at the Dinosaur Stomp*, Carol Diggory Shields

*Down by the Station*, Will Hillenbrand

*Tanka Tanka Skunk*, Steve Webb

*Mouse Mess*, Linnea Asplind
More fun with Miss Mary Mack

Rhyme time... Re-read one of the pages together. Say the last word in each sentence. Ask your child, "Which of these three words rhyme? Which one doesn’t? What other words can you think of that rhyme with ___ (the three rhyming words)?"

Music and movement... Play the hand game on the first pages of the book. If this game is too hard for your child, don’t do the arms and thigh part and begin with a clap on “Miss”.

Watch a video and listen to the tune of Miss Mary Mack online:

bussongs.com/songs/miss_mary_mack.php

For more information about how you can help develop phonological awareness visit: phonologicalawareness.org

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, _____________

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: Chicken Stackers, Fuzzy Lion Ears, Blending Bowl, Dub Cubs, Monkey Match, Theo’s Puzzles, Arty’s Smarty Doors

Scholastic

Clifford’s Sound Game: teacher.scholastic.com/clifford1/flashphonics/index.htm

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

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.

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.

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