

Did you know ...



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

When you are having fun with words through word play, like rhyming or singing, you are helping develop this important early literacy skill.

Here's how ...



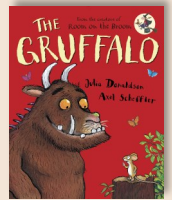
- ✦ Point out sentences where all the words begin with the same letter – The fat frog fell on Friday.
- ✦ Change the words in a nursery rhyme or song with silly or nonsense rhyming words. “Willaby wallaby woo, an elephant sat on you” becomes “Willaby, wallaby, wottle, an elephant sat on a bottle.”
- ✦ Play “I Spy” games with rhyming words or beginning sounds. “I spy with my little eye something that rhymes with far (car).”
- ✦ Point out the little words that make up larger words, such as “hotdog” or “rainbow.”
- ✦ Introduce “homonyms,” words that sound alike but have a different meaning. They may be spelled differently (pair and pear) or the same (bat and bat).



Read



The Gruffalo by Julia Donaldson



Mouse is taking a stroll through the woods when along comes a hungry fox, then an owl, and then a snake. The mouse is good enough to eat but smart enough to know this, so he invents ... the gruffalo! As Mouse explains, the gruffalo is a creature with terrible claws and terrible teeth and other scary features. But Mouse isn't worried. After all, there's no such thing as a gruffalo ... or is there?

More great books by Julia Donaldson:

The Gruffalo's Child

Charlie Cook's Favorite Book

The Snail and the Whale

Room on the Broom

The Baddies

New! Jonty Gentoo

Choose Books



Types of books that 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

Books with animal noises

Books that have repeating words or sounds

Talk



Studies show that when parents and caregivers talk with their children throughout the day, those children learn more words and are better able to learn to read. Asking your child questions about her day, explaining what you're doing as you do it, and talking about what you see as you're out and about are ways to talk *with*, rather than *at*, your child.

Write



Drawing helps your kindergartener develop the fine motor skills needed to hold a pencil and write letters.

Create a gruffalo or monster together.



Help your child draw two circles on top of each other, then take turns adding horns, claws, teeth, big eyes, and other monster things.

Play



I Spy...

Try this: Open a picture book and choose a page. Find something your child may not notice right away. Say, "I spy with my little eye, something ____ (that flies, red, round, that jumps, you can eat)." Let your child guess what it is. Give more clues if needed. Take turns on different pages.

There are lots of things in illustrations for your child to "spy." Each time you read the book together you will notice something new!

Games like these will help your child practice noticing details and finding things that are alike and different. These are important skills that help children be able to identify and write letters and see how different letters form words.



Sing



Head Shoulders Knees and Toes

(Touch each body part as you sing it)

Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes, knees and toes,
And eyes and ears and mouth and nose.
Head, shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes.

(Repeat, getting faster each time)

Now sing:

Horns, fangs, knees and claws, knees and claws.
Horns, fangs, knees and claws, knees and claws.
(repeat)
And eyes and ears and tails and paws,
Horns, fangs, knees and claws, knees and claws.

You can find the "Head Shoulders Knees and Toes" song at <http://tinyurl.com/wccls-knees-toes>
(Washington County Cooperative Library Services)

At your library ...



In addition to books, many libraries offer toys, equipment, supplies, tools, and instruments to support hobbies and crafts, sports and recreation, art and music, baking and gardening, and home repair and maintenance. Visit your library to see what is available in your area!