

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize and manipulate sounds and syllables in words, and words in sentences. Phonological awareness skills are essential prerequisites for reading and writing.

## Rhyming

- Read nursery rhymes or sing songs with rhyming words. Exaggerate the rhyming words. See if your child can tell you which words rhyme.
- Vary the above activity by leaving out the rhyming words and letting your child fill in the blanks. For example, say, "Jack and Jill went up the \_\_\_\_."
- Say two words. Ask your child if they rhyme. For example, say, "Cup, bus: Do these words rhyme?"
- Read Dr. Seuss books or other books with a lot of rhyming words. Help your child find the rhyming words.
- Help your child think of words that rhyme with his or her name, names of family members, days of the week, animals, etc. Throw in some nonsense words for extra fun and practice!



## Syllables

- Clap the syllables in favourite songs or nursery rhymes.
- Clap the syllables in your child's name, names of family members, cartoon characters, foods, etc.
- Vary the clapping activities by stomping, tapping, or taking steps for each syllable.
- Use objects like pennies, buttons, or macaroni to represent syllables. Say each word slowly, putting down a button for each syllable. Then count the objects to see how many syllables were in the word.
- Cut out pictures from a catalogue or magazine. Have your child group the pictures by the number of syllables in each word.

## Sounds

- Help your child think of words with the same sound. For example, *baby, bunny, bed, banana, brown* all begin with the sound 'b'.
- Ask your child to fill a grocery bag with things that begin with the same sound. For example, for the sound 's', your child might choose scissors, cereal, soap, and a strawberry.
- Play guessing games using first sound clues. For example, "I'm thinking of something that begins with the 'b' sound." (Say the sound of 'b', not the letter name.) "It's a food that monkeys like to eat. You have to peel it."
- Say short words, exaggerating the last sound in the word. Ask your child what the last sound is. For example, "Cat. Which sound do you hear at the end of the word?" Your child should say the sound of 't', not the letter name pronounced 'tee'.

