

## Twenty Recommended Daily Phonological Awareness Activities for Families

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(As children learn to name letters, they are also learning what those letters sound like. This handout is focussed on the sounds that we hear when words are read out loud. Remember we are making the sounds, not naming the letters in these activities)

1. Song for segmentation and blending:  
“Listen, Listen to my Word” (sung to the tune of “Twinkle Twinkle Little Star” – song adapted by S. Halldorson from original source, Yopp, 1992)  
(Sample word “cat”)  
“Listen, listen to my word  
Tell me all the sounds you heard  
/k/ the first sound  
“a” is two  
/t/ will give the final clue  
Listen, listen to my word  
Tell me all the sounds you heard”  
Repeat sounds /k/ - “ä” - /t/  
What word did I say? (students guess)
2. Stand for rhyme pairs: Present 2 words; children stand up if they rhyme, sit down if they do not rhyme.
3. Sound detectives: Present short words by indicating only the sound sequence (e.g., /n/ - “ō” – “no”) Children guess the word, being “sound detectives”.
4. Beginning sounds: Decide which sound is at the beginning of each family member’s name (e.g., “All of us whose name begins with the “sh” sound– Sean, Sherry, Cheryl, etc.).
5. I Spy sounds: Play “I Spy”, but not using colour, using initial sounds (not letter names) (e.g., “I spy something that begins with /b/ [not “bee”])

6. Finding rhymes: Give a word (e.g. short word such as “cat”); have children think of as many rhyming words as they can. Explain the rhyme family (e.g., “cat”, “bat”, “hat”, “sat”, “mat” are all “-at” words).
7. Guessing game: (like “20 questions”): Give a descriptive clue and the first sound (not letter name) (e.g., “I’m thinking of something you wear that starts with /h/ [not “aitch”]).
8. Mystery Bag: Place several common objects in a cloth bag, with focus on a particular initial sound or sounds. Taking turns, let each child (if you have more than one) touch an object in the bag, being careful to conceal it. The child guesses what it is from how it feels. The child then pulls the object from the bag , names it, and says the first sound.
9. Rhyme Time: Pick a short word from a theme or book, say it aloud and have children (if more than one) take turns giving rhyming words. For example, “What rhymes with hat?”. Switch to a different rhyming word when 5 words have been generated. If your child has difficulty rhyming, give them the initial sounds. For example, “Hat rhymes with /b/ \_\_\_\_.”
10. Segmenting Words into Sounds: Have family members clap or tap out the syllables in each person’s name. Clap out other words, such as the words of a song, or new words learned at school.
11. Story time: During reading of a story, stop to ask your child one of the following:
  - What are two rhyming words you heard?
  - What are two words that start with the same sound?
  - Tell me a word with 3 syllables or 3 sounds. (Represent sounds using clapping or tapping – this skill will need to be taught first. (see #10)
12. Tongue Twisters: Introduce older children (grade 2+) to tongue twisters such as Peter Piper Picked a Peck of Pickled Peppers. Encourage them to write their own tongue twisters using words that all start with the same sound. As a starting point, they might use words that all start with the initial sound in their own names. This is also a vocabulary and sentence production activity as they will be generating parts of speech.
13. Sound Deletion: For older students (grade 2+), make new words by deleting sounds. For example, “What word do you get when you take the /n/ (not “en”) out of can’t?” (Answer: cat).

14. What am I Thinking of?: (Yopp, 1992) Give a category, for example, “something you wear/clothing”. Then say the word in segments, “/h/ - a - /t/”. Once children can do this activity well, let them take turns providing the categories and segmented words. Use new words they have learned at school.
15. Sounds from Many Languages: Have students who speak more than one language generate rhymes from their language. This is a very powerful activity because it points out that as humans we can hear rhyme without knowing the meaning of the words (ie. French rhyme could be – “bonjour” “au secours”).
16. Cut and Paste: Cut pictures from flyers, catalogs and magazines and glue them on a piece of paper. Look for things that rhyme, or for things that all start with the same sound. You could also sort a few pictures by their first sound, but be sure to keep it simple by having pictures that begin with one or two sounds at a time (e.g. /k/ cat, candy, can; /b/ boot, baby, boat).
17. Read and Rhyme: When reading books with predictable rhymes, pause when you get to the rhyme and see if children can fill in the blank.
18. Connecting Sounds to Letters: Identify one to one correspondence sound-letter connections during reading time together. For example, the letter “bee” and sound /b/ work together and sound alike.  
Identify letters and sounds that do not match perfectly. For example, the letter “aitch” and sound /h/ are different and that makes them harder to remember.
19. I’m Wearing Sounds: Identify beginning sounds, rhyming words and letters on clothing worn by family members. Let children know that words are not only found in books. Generate a discussion around the many places we find words.
20. Sounds in Famous Names: Find names of famous people, characters, places, games or locations and identify the first sound in the names. Some have first and last names that start with the same sound. (e.g. “Mickey Mouse”).

