

# Learning by Listening to Language

Exploring the sounds of language is an important part of learning how to read and write. Spend time listening, talking, and reading together to build your child's skills and confidence. These games will help your child begin to demonstrate an understanding of spoken words, syllables, and sounds.

## Play a game of "I Spy"

Say, "I see something in the room that starts with a b...b...b... letter B." See if your child can guess the object: b...b...b... ball!



## Rhyme time!

Say, "Do you see the cat? Help me think of rhymes! He's sitting on a mat and talking to the rat." Then repeat the rhyming words, "Cat, mat, rat!" Make up silly rhymes such as "apple, bapple, zapple, dapple."



## Sing favorite songs together

Listen for rhyming words, make up new verses, and write down your favorites. Try singing,



"Baa baa black sheep, have you any wool. Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full." Ask your child to listen for the words that rhyme. *Wool* and *full*! Can you think of another idea? How about, "Meow, meow, kitty cat, have you any *mice*? No ma'am, no ma'am, but a couple would be *nice*!"

## Stretch out the sounds of simple words

Say, "I see a dog. D O G. It starts with a 'D' sound and ends with a 'G' sound. The 'O' sound is in the middle.



D O G." Try spelling the word together.

## Talk about the words you see around you

"I see letters on that sign. Let's figure out what it says. O P E N. Let's put them together." Say the sounds and words slowly: "O' ... saying the sound in its name. 'P' popping on my lips. ... 'E' saying 'eh' like elephant. ... 'N' saying the last sound. O P E N. The store is open! We figured it out!"



Any opinions, findings, conclusions, or recommendations expressed in this tip sheet are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Illinois State Board of Education.



13 Children's Research Center  
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  
51 Gerty Dr. • Champaign, IL 61820-7469  
Telephone: 217-333-1386  
Toll-free: 877-275-3227  
E-mail: iel@illinois.edu  
<https://illinoisearlylearning.org>

