

Literacy Tips & Activities

Here are some quick and easy literacy games to play with your child which can help them begin to develop their skills of reading and comprehension.

1. Rhyme Machine

There's no actual machine in this game, but we pretend to put a word into the 'machine' and then we try to think of as many words that rhyme with that word. Some are just made up words that rhyme, but that's okay! It's still rhyming and listening to the sounds in a word. Here's an example of how the game is played:

Me: "Bobby, what word do you want to put in the rhyme machine today?"

Bobby: "Let's put in 'cat!'"

Me: "Okay, let's see...cat rhymes with bat and mat! Your turn!"

Bobby: "Lat. Zat. Hat. Rat."

We keep doing this until we can't think of any more words. Provide a few examples of rhyming words if your child is having trouble, and remember that even made up words count in the game as long as they rhyme!

2. Syllable Count

Another reading skill that's important for children to know is counting syllables, or the parts of a word. We think of a word, say it out loud, and then clap and count the syllables (the sound parts of the word). We look around the room and find objects and find the syllables.

Me: "Okay Bobby, let's find something in the room to count syllables."

Bobby: "Okay, how about couch! (claps while he says the word) 1! Couch has 1 syllable."

Me: "Awesome! Let's pick something else!"

Bobby: "How about 'table'? (claps out ta ble) Table has 2 syllables!"

Keep playing and finding items - you can create a challenge to see what word has the most syllables!

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3. What Do You Hear?

Hearing the beginning sounds of words is another important literacy skill. One way we practice this is with a game we call "What Do You Hear?" To play this game, I say a word and then the children tell me what letter the word starts with. Here's an example:

Me: "What does the word 'ball' start with?"

Boys: "B-b-b B!"

Me: "Yes! Ball starts with 'b'!"

You can also try this game by playing it as "I Spy..."

Example: I spy an item that starts with the /b/ sound. Can you find something that starts with the /b/ sound - letter b?"

4. What Comes After...

For this game, I say a letter of the alphabet and ask the child what letter comes next. This could be challenging at first, but it's a great time to practice saying or singing the alphabet song as a reminder!

5. What Comes After...

Reading with your child!

This is one of the **most engaging and authentic experiences** for a child to develop their literacy skills. If possible, try to pick books that your child shows an interest in - this will help them stay motivated and engaged! Try asking your child what way the book should be held (upside down or right side up?) or where you should start reading (at the beginning or at the end?). Use your finger to point to the words as you read them and show your child what direction you are going as you read. Make sure to stop occasionally to look at and discuss the pictures or predictions of what is going to happen? (Example: "Who is in the pictures?" "What are they doing?" "What do you think might happen next?").

Choosing books that use a lot of repetition (repeating words/phrases), rhymes (words that have the same ending sound), and alliterations (words that start with the same letter) are ways to further extend your child's learning and literacy skills!