

# Tip Sheet: Play Rhyming Games with Children

## FOR PRESCHOOL PARENTS

For additional support on this topic, visit <https://bit.ly/QTRhyme> to view a short video.

### WHY?

Playing rhyming games and singing rhyming songs helps children pay attention to the sounds in words. This helps them develop phonological awareness skills. Phonological awareness is the knowledge that language is made up of sounds and the ability to detect the individual sounds of spoken language.

Playing rhyming games, singing songs, or reading nursery rhymes are all ways to help young children become confident in manipulating the sounds in words. This is an important pre-reading skill!

### WHAT?

Words are made up of one or more **syllables** or sounds. In the word *basketball*, there are three syllables – bas / ket / ball.

Syllables have a beginning or *onset*, and an ending or *rime*. With the word *chat*, the onset is *ch* and the rime is *at*.

Words that **rhyme** sound the same at the end, or have the same *rime*, but start with different onsets.

Here is an example:

*chat*  
*hat*  
*bat*  
*mat*  
*flat*

Children's songs frequently have rhymes that can encourage their knowledge of sounds. This knowledge helps them get ready to read.

### HOW?

You can play a rhyming game or sing a rhyming song any time – try it while you are waiting in line or traveling in a car or bus together. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Sing "The Name Game" using the names of friends and people in your family.
- Most nursery rhymes and children's songs have rhyming words. Emphasize those words or pause before them and let your child say what word comes next.
- Once your child is very familiar with a nursery rhyme, say it with a mistake in one of the rhyming words. Let your child correct you.
- Ask your child for a rhyming animal or food pair, such as "What's an animal that rhymes with *fog*?" It's okay to use nonsense words, too. For example, "What's a food that rhymes with *pamburger*?"
- Play "I Spy" with rhyming words. For example, "I spy, with my little eye, something that rhymes with block (clock)."
- Take turns saying rhyming words and see how long you can go!