

# Tip Sheet: Play with Word Families

## FOR PRESCHOOL PARENTS

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

### WHY?

The development of phonological awareness skills, or the ability to recognize the different sounds in our language, helps children to become better readers.

Phonological awareness skills are developing while children are in preschool and elementary school.

Drawing attention to rhyming words and **word families** helps children pay attention to the sounds in words and supports their phonological awareness development by encouraging children to hear, and tell the difference between, the sounds at the beginning and end of words.

### WHAT?

Word families are groups of words with the same ending, such as:

- dog
- log
- hog
- smog

Playing with word families helps children notice **onsets** and **rimes**. The **rime** of a syllable or one-syllable word is the last part with the vowel, and the **onset** is the part of the word that comes before that.

For example: **dog**

The onset is **d-** and the rime is **-og**.

### HOW?

Here are a few word family games you can play with your child:

- Make a word tower with your child. Take turns saying words with the same ending, such as **back**, **stack**, **track**, **rack**, **lack**, etc. For each word, stack a block. See how tall you can make it!
- Play a guessing game using word families. For example, say, "I'm thinking of a word that ends the same as **bike**." Have your child guess the word. If they guess a word that doesn't end with **-ike**, remind them that the secret word sounds like the end of **bike**.
- Work with your child to make a flipbook that has one **rime** with different **onset** letters.
  1. Staple several smaller sheets of paper to a longer piece.
  2. Write the ending, or the **rime**, on the longer piece and different beginning letters, or **onsets**, on the shorter pieces.
- Work with your child to come up with ideas for the onsets of a word family. Talk about which onsets make real words and which make "silly" or "nonsense" words. For example, using the **-an** word family, you could say "fan" and "zan."

