

Environmental Sounds

- Go on a listening walk: When walking down the road, make a point of listening to different sounds: cars revving, people talking, birds singing, dogs barking. When you get home, try to remember all the sounds you heard. You could try recording the sounds, to listen to them again, or try reproducing them yourselves, using your voices or instruments.
- Make sounds using a range of props such as sticks and brushes. Run them along a fence, tap a bin lid or door. Compare different materials such as wood or metal.
- Play sound guessing games using everyday items such as a set of keys, a crisp packet, squeaky toy, toaster etc.

Instrumental Sounds

- Make your own musical instruments, using cardboard rolls, tins, dried peas, beans, stones, elastic bands etc. Shake these loudly, softly, as you are marching, skipping or stamping. Play 'Guess what's inside the instrument'.
- Sing known songs loudly and then softly, stretch words in known songs and add new words or sounds.
- Listen to a range of music with your child, from modern to classical. Encourage your child to move in response to the variety of musical styles and moods.

Body Percussion

- Learn some action rhymes, such as 'Wind the bobbin up'.
- Listen to rhymes and songs.
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/learning/schoolradio/subjects/earlylearning/nurserysongs>
Clap along with familiar rhymes and learn new ones.
- Listen to the sounds your feet make when walking, running or skipping: slowly, softly, fast, stamping hard, in flip flops, boots etc.
- Try different types of clapping: clap your hands softly, quickly and make a pattern for your child to follow. Do the same clapping your thighs or stamping your feet.
- Tap your fingers. Click your tongue. Invent body percussion routines for your child to copy. Encourage them to make up their own for you to copy.

Rhythm and rhyme

- Get into the rhythm of language: bounce your child on your knee to the rhythm of a song or nursery rhyme; march or clap to a chant or poem.
- Help your child move to the rhythm of a song or rhyme.
- Read or say poems, songs, nursery songs and rhyming stories as often as you can. Try to use gestures, tap regular beats and pause to emphasise the rhythm of the piece. Add percussion to mark the beats using your hands, feet or instruments.

- Try out some rhythmic chanting such as ‘two, four, six, eight, hurry up or we’ll be late’ or ‘bip bop boo, where are you?’

Alliteration (words that begin with the same sound)

- Alliteration is a lot of fun to play around with. Your child’s name can be a good place to start, for example, say: ‘Megan makes mud pies.’, ‘Carl caught a cat.’. Encourage other family members to have a go, for example: ‘Mummy munches muffins’, ‘Daddy is doing the dishes’.
- Emphasise alliteration in songs and stories, for example: ‘Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers’.
- Play around with familiar song such as, ‘Old MacDonald had some sheep, shoes, shorts, with a sh sh here and a sh sh there’, to emphasise alliteration.
- Identify the odd one out for example: cat, cup, boy, car.
- Make up little nonsense stories together using lots of alliteration.
- Collect items that start with the same sound from the park, the garden and around the house.
- When shopping, think about items you are buying and say: ‘a tall tin of tomatoes’, ‘a lovely little lemon’. Encourage your child to do the same.

Voice Sounds

- Make fun noises and nonsense words.
- Say words in different ways: fast, slowly, high, low, using a funny voice.
- ‘Sing’ known songs using only sounds e.g. ‘la, la, la’ and ask your child to guess the song.
- Vary your tempo and pitch when reading stories.

Oral blending and segmenting

This is all oral (spoken). Your child is not expected to match the letter to the sound at this stage. The emphasis is on helping children to hear the separate sounds in words and to create spoken sounds. Oral blending and segmenting is a later skill that will be important when the time comes for your child to read and write. Being able to hear the separate sounds within a word and then blend them together to understand that word is really important. The separate sounds (phonemes) of the word are spoken aloud, in order, all through the word and are then merged together into the whole word. This merging is called blending. For example, the adult would say c-a-t = cat. Segmenting is the opposite of blending and is a vital skill for spelling. The whole word is spoken aloud, then broken up into its separate sounds in order, all through the word. For example, the adult would say cat = c-a-t.

- Give your child instructions using sound talk e.g. Put your shoes on your f-ee-t. Brush your t-ee-th. S-i-t on the chair. P-a-ss the water.

- Introduce a new toy that can only use sound talk. Get your child to ask it questions which it answers in sound talk. E.g. What is your favourite colour? r-e-d What do you like eating? f-i-sh
- Clap out CVC words such as s-a-t, s-i-t, p-i-n, t-a-p. Clap each individual sound and then speed them up and say them closer together.