

Sounds like fun!

Playing with the sounds of language

One of the most important skills early readers learn is to start to take words apart by the sounds in the word. Children's ability to do this is a strong predictor for their success as readers. This ability to hear and manipulate the sounds in words is called Phonological Awareness. The word "bag" has three sounds (called phonemes) in it: /b/ /a/ and /g/. If you switched the beginning and ending sounds, you'd get "gab". Playing with sounds seems like it's complicated but it can be as simple as playing rhyming games and singing songs. You can help your child become better at hearing the sounds in words in lots of fun ways:

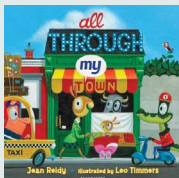
- **With your baby**, mimic their babbling sounds. Make sure your baby can see you making the sounds so she can start to make her mouth do the same thing yours does.
- **Introduce new sounds** to the babbling. Smile and cheer when they repeat those sounds.
- **Read rhyming books**. Sometimes leave off the last word in a sentence so your child can supply the rhyming word. They have to listen to the other words and how they sound to do that.
- **Sing rhyming songs** like The Itsy Bitsy Spider.
- **Guess the sound**. Say a word and have your child guess the beginning sound. What's the ending sound? (Remember, this is about sounds not letters so if your word is SHEEP, the beginning sound is /sh/ not /s/.)

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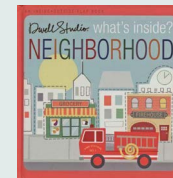
All Through My Town
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