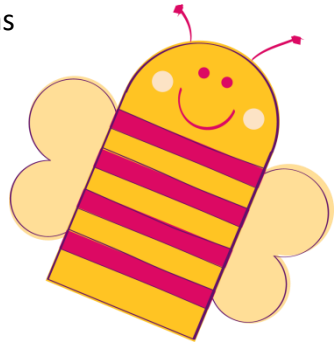


Wonderful ways with words

Playing with words and exploring sounds as part of songs, rhymes, poems, stories and everyday conversations, helps children to identify the different sounds that make up spoken language. This is an important part of learning to read, and later of being able to spell.



The sound of spoken language

Spoken language is made up of lots of different sounds. These sounds are made up of single letters (e.g. 'a' or 'm') and combinations of letters (e.g. 'th' or 'oo') which are blended together in a variety of ways to make words. Different languages have different numbers of sounds – English has around 44 sounds that can be made using the 26 letters in the English alphabet!

Children naturally pick up the sounds they hear in the language spoken around them as part of everyday life. Being able to tune into the sounds that are important in their language helps children to:

- 'sound out' words when reading
- work out what letters and letter combinations they need when spelling.

Being able to hear the different sounds that make up language helps children learn to read and write.



Wonderful words and super sounds

Playing games with words and exploring sounds can help children to become familiar with the sounds that are a part of their language. It is also good exercise for developing their mouth muscles – this will help them to increase the range of sounds that they can make.

Songs, rhymes, stories and everyday conversations offer lots of opportunities to explore sounds by playing with:

- rhyming words
 - *frog and log, mice and nice (or rice!)*
 - *cat, mat, sat, rat, pat, bat*
- the beginning of words that sound the same
 - *wonderful ways with words*
 - *the crazy cat climbed the colossal crane!*
- nonsense words that play with sounds
 - *quiggly wiggly*
 - *Polly wolly doodle*
 - *Fee, Fi, Fo, Fum...*

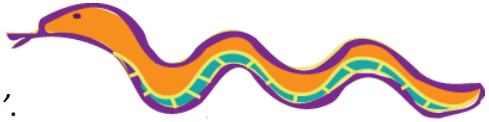


From around three years old, children start to become aware that sounds can be linked to letters or combinations of letters. Over time, with a *lot* of practice and opportunities to listen to the sounds in words, they will then be able to start using their knowledge to ‘sound out’ words in order to read, and later – to spell.



Hearing the sounds in words

When encouraging your child to make letter sounds, it is helpful to use the sound that you hear when speaking the word. For example – for the sound of the letter ‘s’ in *sister*, use ‘sssss’ (like a hissing snake), rather than ‘suh’.



This will make it easier for your child to blend the sounds together when they begin to read and write – and to separate them when they learn about spelling.

It’s not always easy to ‘hear’ the sounds in words or the patterns in rhyming sounds – it takes time, practice and careful listening!

**Wonderful ways with words will work wonders
with reading and writing!**

The power of rhythm and rhyme

As adults, we can often remember the words to a song, rhyme or chant that we may have heard years ago – perhaps a rhyme to help us remember something or a clapping song.

Children often enjoy listening to the patterns, rhythms and sounds of rhyming words that are a part of songs, rhymes, poems or chants. Playing with language in this way helps children to remember the sounds in words.



**Songs, rhymes, poems and chants
are powerful ways for children to
experience and identify the sounds
and rhythms of language.**

Playing with words and exploring sounds

There are many ways that you can encourage your child to play with words and explore sounds. Here are a few ideas to try – you might find these trigger some memories of your own and you might be surprised at how much you remember!

- tongue twisters – these usually have the same letter for each or most of the words
 - *She sells sea shells on the sea shore*
 - *Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers*
- rhymes or ‘ditties’ – useful for helping to remember things!
 - *righty tighty, lefty loosey* – a reminder for which way to turn things when undoing or tightening them!
 - *‘i’ before ‘e’, except after ‘c’* – taught in school as a way to remember how to spell some tricky words
- playground or skipping games – can you remember any from when you were younger?
- nonsense poems – these can be fun to make up, they don’t have to make any sense at all! Here’s our attempt:



*People people love to play
when dancing on their heads all day
they sing-a-long-a-dingle rhyme
until the moon begins to shine
‘tis then they polish teacups bright
and hang them on the trees at night!*