

# PLAY AND LEARN AT HOME



February 2021

## PHONOLOGICAL AWARENESS

We're focusing on the early literacy skill called phonological awareness, or the ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words. This helps children sound out words when they start learning to read.

The musical activities below will help develop a child's phonological awareness by slowing down language. Individual sounds are easier to hear, and rhyming sounds and syllables are highlighted. These activities also improve self-regulation and concentration, as well as math and memory skills!

## LITTLE EXPLORERS: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING, ART AND MATH

Music is one of the first ways children experience math. They naturally respond to the rhythms and patterns of music. Rhythm helps children learn to recognize one-to-one correspondence and to identify and predict patterns.

In Call and Response songs, the leader sings/chants the first line or verse, and the others respond. The song below encourages clapping, drumming or singing your child's name so they can make out syllables. If you change the dynamics of the song, like chanting quietly or loudly, children can hear the rhymes.

### **"Hickety Pickety Bumble Bee" (Chant or Sing)**

Adult: Hickety pickety bumble bee. (Sounds like Hick-e-ty pick-e-ty bum-ble bee.) Can you say your name for me? (*Child says their name*)

Adult: Hickety pickety bumble bee. Can you clap your name for me? (*Child claps syllables in name*)

Adult: Hickety pickety bumble bee. Can you whisper your name for me? (*Child whispers*)

Now change roles! Children can change the song to match their voices and their ideas. Listen to songs like "No More Pie," "Jambo" and "Who Fed the Chickens?" by Ella Jenkins. More call and response songs are "Down by the Bay" and "The Green Grass Grows All Around."

## READY, SET, KINDERGARTEN!: SOCIALLY AND EMOTIONALLY READY FOR SCHOOL

A strong working memory helps children remember instructions, lists, the sequence of a story and listen for details. Cumulative songs, or songs that add on new lyrics each verse, require children to remember what happened. As some lines are repeated multiple times, children have an opportunity to hear the smaller sounds of words.

Here are some of our favorite cumulative songs to search for:

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| • "The Farmer in the Dell"                    | • "B-I-N-G-O"                               |
| • "There Was an Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly" | • "I Like Apples on My Pizza"               |
| • "And the Green Grass Grows All Around"      | • "There's a Hole in the Bottom of the Sea" |

## FAMILY PLACE PLAY AND LEARN: LEARNING THROUGH PLAY

- **Sing it!:** Bounce your baby on your lap or clap to the beat with your toddler when you sing to add a physical dimension to learning about the rhythm of language. Rhythm instruments are fun, too.
- **Listen up!:** Children need to be able to distinguish between different sounds to read. Can you sing and clap faster and slower (tempo)? Clap loudly and softly (dynamics)? Listen to a variety of music styles to help children pay attention to and focus on different sounds.
- **Clean up, Clean up!:** It can be hard for little ones to transition to something new. The ability to regulate one's emotions when frustrated, control impulses and refocus attention on a new task are part of developing self-regulation skills. Songs can help! There's a reason that parents and kids alike drop what they are doing when they hear, "The Cleanup Song". Sing the same song at bedtime, when getting dressed, saying goodbye, etc. "It's time to brush our teeth, it's time to brush our teeth, hi-ho the derry-oh, it's time to brush our teeth."
- **Tune Up!:** Have you ever noticed the tune to "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" is the same as "The ABC Song"? Many children's songs can easily work with different words. Make up your own songs to a familiar tune. For example: "I see Nico, there he is. What do you think he wants to do? Let's roll the ball down the street and see if he can catch it with his feet." Encourage your child to make up songs and their own tunes, too. It's fun to hear sounds in new ways. (Notice this month's book, *Old Mikamba Had a Farm*, is a new take on an old tune.)

## LEARNING ON THE GO: BUILDING EARLY LITERACY SKILLS

Remember those nursery rhymes you learned as a child? Guess what? Those old rhymes (or brand-new ones) in any language are a great way to build pre-reading skills! Google "nursery rhyme activities for children" for LOTS more ideas! Here are some of our favorites:

- Rhyme/song dice! Take an empty square tissue box (or other small, square-ish box). Print or draw pictures of familiar songs and stick them on each side of the dice. Roll the dice and sing or say that rhyme!
- Make a family rhyme book. Have your child draw a picture of a favorite rhyme. Then you write the words that go with it. When you've got a bunch of these, put them together in a binder or book. You can take this along for boring car rides and let your child choose songs to sing.
- Make up your own twist on familiar rhymes. Let your child fill in the last word of a rhyme and see what silly images you create! "The three little kittens, they lost their...HAIR!?" Take turns saying the rhymes and adding your own spin.

## FIND OUT MORE!

If you'd like to know more about phonological awareness or any early literacy topic, we're happy to help! Visit [arapahoelibraries.org](http://arapahoelibraries.org), click on **Services** and select **Educator and Parent Support**. Tell us what you'd like to know and we'll help you find the answers!

Did you know we also have Play and Learn at Home videos? It's true! Visit us at [arapahoelibraries.org/0-5](http://arapahoelibraries.org/0-5). Once you're there, click **Watch and Learn** and look for the Play and Learn videos and posts. You'll even see your favorite early literacy librarians, Betsy, Mary, Lauren and Mollie!