Make It, Play It, Read It

Literacy activities & games for parents and children

Title 1 Program
Westfield Public Schools
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Homonyms

ant—aunt
ate—eight
bare—bear
beat—beet
bee—be
blew—blue
board—bored
by—bored
cell—sell
cent—sent
cord—cord
creak—creek
defar—deer
dew—doe
die—dough
eye—I
ear—deer
ear—ear
find—fin
fir—fur
flea—flee
flower—flour
for—four
foul—fowl

gait—gate
grate—great
guessed—guest
haul—hall
hay—hey
hoarse—horse
hole—whole
idol—idle
l’ll—isle
inn—in
knead—need
knight—night
knot—not
know—no
loan—lone
made—maid
mail—male
new—knew
none—nun
oh—owe
one—won
pall—pale
pain—pane
pair—pare

paws—pause
peace—piece
plain—plane
praise—preys
rain—rein
read—reed
right—write
sail—sale
sew—so
sole—soul
some—sum
son—sun
steal—steel
tail—tale
their—there
toe—tow
too—two
vain—vein
wail—whale
wait—weight
weak—week
wear—ware
which—witch
wood—would

This booklet contains simple, fun activities you can do at home with your child to develop and encourage literacy skills. The ideas are listed by category:

- Alphabet Skills
- Activities with Magnetic Letters
- Phonemic Awareness
- Vowels
- Sight Words
- CVC (consonant—vowel—consonant words)
- Building Words / Word Families
- Reading Fluency
- Vocabulary
- Spelling
- Writing and Storytelling
- Miscellaneous

The most difficult part of compiling these activities was deciding how to categorize them and assign each activity to a section. For example, reading CVC (consonant—vowel—consonant) words requires letter recognition and phonemic awareness. But... they can be used to explore word families, and adding a letter can bring the word into the category of blends or silent-e words. Since no one literacy skill exists in isolation, the categories are a only general guide.

Because these are simple activities, they can be easily changed to fit a variety of skills. Zap! is listed as a sight word game, but a change of words could make it useful for silent-e words or controlled vowels. Similarly, games based on classics like Bingo, Concentration, Go Fish, Connect Four or Dominoes can be used for almost any skill. Experiment with variations you or your child think of. And most of all,

**MAKE IT, PLAY IT, READ IT & HAVE FUN.**
Alphabet Skills

One of the first steps in moving from oral language to being a reader is learning about the alphabet—letter shape recognition, letter name knowledge, letter sound knowledge, the ability to print letters and rapid letter naming.

Underwater I Spy—You will need alphabet beads, glitter, sequins and corn syrup. Ask your child to find one bead of each letter of the alphabet. You can use two of each if you have enough beads. Drop the beads into the bottle. Add sequins and some glitter. Add corn syrup until the bottle is half full. The corn syrup slows down the motion of the contents and prevents the glitter from sticking together. Add water until the bottle is almost filled. You might want glue the bottle cap on the bottle! Give the bottle to your child and ask him to shake it. How many letters can he spy? Can he find the letters in his name? The entire alphabet?

Bottle Cap Memory—Make letter caps (see the magnetic letters section. Make two of each—upper case and one lower case. Choose 5 or 6 pairs of caps and place them face down. Take turns lifting up a cap, then trying to find its matching letter.

Find the Sound—Write letters on sticky notes and have your child post them on objects that start with the sound.

Alphabet War—Make alphabet cards by writing one letter on each of 52 cards. Make 2 cards for each letter. This game is for two players—each gets half of the shuffled deck. Both players turn over a card from their pile. Whoever turns over the card with the higher value wins both cards — A has the lowest value, and Z the highest value. You may want to write the alphabet on a strip of paper to make it easier to determine the relative values of cards. In the event of a tie, turn over 2 more cards—the winner gets all 4 cards.

Letter Massage—Using one finger, write a letter on each other’s back and guess which letter it is.
isk: brisk, disk, frisk, risk, whisk
ist: fist, list, mist, twist, wrist
ine: dine, find, line, mine, nine, pine, shine, spine, vine, wine
ind: bind, blind, find, grind, kind, mind, wind
ock: block, clock, dock, flock, knock, lock, rock, sock
oil: boil, broil, coil, foil, soil, spoil
omp: chomp, clomp, romp, stomp, tromp
ong: bong, gong, long, pong, song
orn: born, corn, horn, scorn, thorn, torn, worn
uck: buck, cluck, duck, luck, pluck, stuck, suck, truck, tuck
ump: bump, dump, hump, jump, lump, plump, pump, stump
ung: clung, flung, hung, sprung, strung, sung
unk: bunk, chunk, dunk, flunk, hunk, skunk, sunk, trunk
unt: blunt, bunt, hunt, punt, runt
ush: blush, brush, crush, flush, hush, mush, rush, slush
ust: bust, dust, gust, just, must, rust

Four-letter word ending combinations (word families/chunks)
The combinations and words listed are examples, not complete lists

atch: batch, catch, hatch, latch, match, patch
etch: fetch, retch, sketch, stretch, wretch
ight: bright, light, might, right, sight, slight, tight
itch: ditch, hitch, pitch, stitch, switch, witch
ouch: couch, crouch, grouch, pouch, slouch, vouch
ound: bound, found, ground, hound, mound, pound, round, sound

Alphabet Skills, continued

Clip Match—You will need a paper plate and clothespins to make an upper/lower case clip match. Around the edge of a plate, write an upper-case alphabet. On each clothespin, write a lower case letter. Ask your child to match the letters.

Pasta Letters—You will need uncooked elbow macaroni and spaghetti for this activity. Write a name or word, making sure the curves and straight lines of the letters are obvious. Help your child use pieces of spaghetti and elbow noodles to form the curves and straight lines of each letter.

Magic Jar—Have your child decorate a jar or can which has a lid. Cut small cards that will fit in the magic jar. Ask your child to write one letter of the alphabet on each card. To play, shake the jar. Players take turns removing one card. The player then attempts to name three things that start with that letter while the other player counts on her fingers to 10. If the player names three appropriate words in that time, she keeps the card. If not, it goes back in the jar, which is shaken again. The person who collects the most cards wins the game. When an adult/or older child plays with a younger child, require the adult to name 4 or 5 things that start with the letter.

Alphabet Swing—Play this game with your child while you are on the swingset. The first person calls out a letter or letter and it’s sound (for younger children). The other player tries to name a word that starts with that letter on the next upswing. Can you get through the whole alphabet without having to start over? Variation: Take turns saying the letters of the alphabet in order.

Box Bounce—You will need a small box and a ball for this activity. Stand facing your child with your child holding the box. Bounce the ball once between you and your child, then have her catch it in the box. Repeat, each time saying a letter as you begin to bounce the ball. Your child should try to say the sound the letter makes, or a word...
Magnetic Letters

Magnetic letters are available in the toy section of most department stores and can often be found in dollar stores. If possible, get both upper and lower case letters for your child to work with. If you don’t have magnetic letters, for many of the activities you can use:

**LETTER CAPS**—if you don’t have magnetic letters, or to try something different, you can use the tops from water bottles or milk cartons. Clearly print one letter on each cap (inside or on top – your choice). Use a different color cap or pen for upper and lower case letters.

**LETTER LINKS**—You will need Lego or similar interlocking blocks and small stickers for this activity. Put a sticker on each cube. Write letters (or word chunks) on the stickers. Children can put cubes together to form words, or use the blocks individually for sorting.

Here are some activities which use magnetic letters:

**Sort & Match**—Ask your child to sort or match letters by

- Slanting lines vs. straight lines:  v, w, x - p, b, l, d, r, t
- Upper / lower case letters
- Tails / no tails:  y, p, q, j - m, n, w, r, s, x, c
- Circles / no circles:  o, b, p, a, d, g - k, x, w, h, r, f
- Tunnels / no tunnels:  h, u, n, m - j, g, b, f, c, s, o
- Long sticks / short sticks:  h, d, p, p, h - r, u, m
- Tall short letters:  t, h, d, f, b - m, c, o, n, x, r
- Dots / no dots:  i, j - m, a, t, p, s
- Same upper case—lower case / Different upper case—lower case:  Cc, Oo, Pp, Ss, Vv - Aa, Bb, Dd, Ee

**What's Missing?** - Put some of the letters in alphabetical order, but leave one out. Can your child name the missing letter?

**Make New Words**—Build several words and show your child how to change, add or take away letters to make a new word.

Three-letter word ending combinations (word families/chunks)

The combinations and words listed are examples, not complete lists

- **-ack**: back, black, crack, pack, quack, rack, snack, track
- **-aft**: craft, draft, raft, shaft
- **-all**: ball, call, fall, hall, small, tall, wall
- **-amp**: camp, champ, clamp, lamp, ramp, stamp, tramp
- **-and**: band, brand, grand, hand, land, sand, stand
- **-ang**: bang, clang, gang, hand, rang, sang, slang
- **-ank**: bank, blank, crank, rank, sank, spank, tank, thank, yank
- **-ant**: pant, plant, rant, slant
- **-ash**: bash, cash, crash, dash, flash, rash, smash, splash, trash
- **-ask**: bask, cask, mask, task
- **-ast**: cast, fast, last, mast, past
- **-ave**: brave, cave, crave, gave, pave, save, shave, slave, wave
- **-eck**: check, deck, fleck, neck, peck, speck, wreck
- **-eft**: cleft, heft, left, theft
- **-ell**: bell, fell, sell, shell, smell, spell, tell, well, yell
- **-end**: bend, blend, lend, mend, send, spend, tend
- **-ent**: bent, cent, dent, sent, tent, vent, went
- **-est**: best, chest, guest, nest, pest, quest, rest, test, west
- **-ice**: dice, nice, price, rice, slice, spice, twice
- **-ick**: brick, chick, kick, lick, pick, quick, sick, thick, trick, wick
- **-ill**: bill, hill, fill, kill, pill, spill, still, will
- **-ilt**: built, guilt, kilt, quilt, spilt, tilt, wilt
- **-imp**: blimp, chimp, crimp, limp, skimp
- **-ing**: bring, cling, fling, king, ring, sing, spring, string, thing, wing
- **-ink**: blink, drink, link, pink, shrink, sink, think, wink
- **-int**: glint, hint, lint, mint, print, splint, squat, fint
- **-ish**: dish, fish, squish, swish, wish
-ot: cot, dot, got, hot, knot, lot, not, pot, rot, tot
-ox: box, fox, lox, pox
-ub: club, cub, rub, scrub, shrub, stub, sub, tub
-ud: bud, cud, dud, mud, thud
-ug: bug, dug, hug, jug, lug, mug, rug, shrug, tug
-um: bum, drum, gum, hum, plum, run, sum
-un: bun, fun, gun, run, stun, sun
-ut: but, cut, gut, hut, nut, rut, shut

**Magnetic Letters, continued**

**Crossword Letters**—Make a word and then ask your child to add a word that starts with one of the letters. For example:

```
hat
hop
```

**Connecting Words**—Ask your child to make a word and then make another word that is like it in some way (starts the same, ends the same, rhymes). Have her tell how it is the same.

**Letters To Go**—Find an old cookie sheet and put some magnetic letters in a baggie. An instant travel game!

**Missing Letters**—Make the last part of a word such as __ick, __air, __ell and have your child put one or two letters in the beginning to make a word. Repeat with the missing letters at the end of words.

**Letter Game**—Each player starts with 6 letters. The players try to make words with their letters, then take turns taking one new letter at a time from a bag. The first player to use all his letters wins the game.

**Letter Bingo**—Make two bingo cards with a grid of three boxes across and three down. Trace one lowercase letter in each box. Use different letters for each card. Put a pile of magnetic letters that are represented on the cards and some that are not in a bowl. Take turns taking a letter out of the bowl, say the letter and try to match to your card. The first person to fill three boxes in a row wins.

**Letter Pictures**—Magnetic letters come in all shapes and sizes and can be arranged in many different ways. Try to make a picture using the letters. Rotate them to get different shapes and angles. Funny looking creatures or faces are an excellent way to start—use 2 e’s for eyes, a J for a nose and an O for a mouth.

**How Many Words?** Write down a long word, such as vacation. Have your child spell the word with the letters, then use the letters to make as many words as possible. Having the letters to physically change and move makes this activity easier than the paper-only version.
Magnetic Letters, continued

3 Cent Words—You will need three pennies (or other small objects) for this activity. Draw three lines on a piece of paper: _ _ _. Think of a CVC word. Place 10 magnetic letters above the lines—the 3 letters in the word and 7 others. If you don’t have magnetic letters you can use bottlecap letters or small cards. Slowly say the word, emphasizing each letter sound. Ask the child to choose a letter. If that sound is in the word, place it on the correct line. If the sound is not in the word, put a penny under the word. Repeat until all three sounds have been matched with a letter. The goal is to have 3 pennies or less under the word. Keep track of your child’s progress. Soon you will be able to say “Yesterday that was a 3 cent word. Today it is a 2 cent word!”

Acrostic Poems—Choose a word with your child and arrange it on a magnetic surface. Then, using each letter, think of a word that corresponds to the chosen word. For example, if the word was CAT – C could stand for Cuddly, A for Animal and T for Trouble. If you have enough letters, arrange the main word in a vertical line and then use the other letters to spell the other words.

Mixed Up Words—Select the letters that form a simple word that your child knows and mix them up. Help your child rearrange the letters to remake the word.

Choose 1 Letter—Select one letter and put it in the middle of the refrigerator. Ask your child to find as many object as he can that start with that letter. To extend the game, use a blend such as TH or SH or try to find items with double letters such as STOOL or FEET.

Letter in the Circle—Draw two circles and place a letter in each. Have your child put letters in each circle and have them say how they are alike. For older children, make the circles overlap—the overlap area is for letters with both attributes. For example, the left circle could contain letters with only straight lines (t, y, x). The right circle could be for letters with only curves (c, o, s). The overlapping area would be for letters with both attributes (p, m).

Two-letter word ending combinations (word families/chunks)
The combinations and words listed are examples, not complete lists

-ab: cab, crab, dab, gab, nab, slab, scab, stab
-ad: bad, dad, fad, glad, had, mad, pad, sad
-ag: bag, brag, drag, flag, gag, rag, sag, tag, wag
-am: clam, ham, jam, ram, slam, swam, yam
-an: can, fan, man, pan, plan, ran, tan, van
-ap: cap, clap, flap, lap, map, nap, snap, trap, zap
-at: bat, cat, fat, flat, hat, mat, pat, rat, sat, vat
-ax: fax, lax, max, sax, tax, wax
-ay: clay, day, gay, hay, may, pay, play, say, stay, way
-ed: bed, fed, fled, led, red, sled, wed
-eg: beg, dreg, keg, leg
-em: gem, hem, stem, them
-en: den, hen, men, pen, ten, then, when, wren
-et: bet, get, jet, let, met, net, pet, set, wet, yet
-ib: bib, fib, rib
-id: bid, did, hid, kid, lid, rid, skid, slid
-ig: big, dig, fig, jig, pig, twig, wig
-im: dim, him, rim, skim, slim swim, trim
-in: chin, fin, pin, sin, skin, spin, thin, twin, win
-ip: dip, drip, flip, rip, sip, skip, slip, trip, zip
-it: bit, fit, hit, kit, knit, lit, pit, quit, sit, split
-ix: fix, mix, six
-ob: blob, cob, job, knob, mob, rob, sob, slob
-od: cod, pod, rod, sod
-og: dog, fog, frog, hog, jog, log, smog
-op: cap, chop, drop, flop, hop, mop, pop, shop, stop, top
**Final consonant blends and word examples**

- `ct`—collect, correct, effect, exact, fact, reject, select, subject
- `ft`—craft, draft, girt, left, lift, shift, soft, swift, theft, tuff
- `ld`—bald, bold, build, child, cold, gold, hold, old, sold, told
- `lf`—elf, golf, herself, himself, myself, self, shelf, wolf, yourself
- `lk`—bulk, chalk, elk, hulk, mild, silk, skulk, talk, walk
- `lm`—balm, calm, elm, helm, realm
- `lp`—gulp. Help, pulp, scalpel, yelp
- `lt`—adult, belt, colt, felt, fault, guilt, halt, insult, melt, quilt, result, salt
- `mp`—bump, camp, damp, dump, jump, lamp, shrimp, stamp
- `nc(e)`—advance, bounce, dance, fence, once, prince, since
- `nch`—bench, branch, crunch, French, inch, lunch, pinch, ranch
- `nd`—band, blend, found, friend, hand, pound, round, sand, wind
- `nk`—bank, black, drink, ink, junk, pink, shrink, thank, think, wink
- `nt`—ant, cent, faint, front, paint, plant, sent, spent, squint, tent
- `pt`—accept, adopt, concept, disrupt, Egypt, kept, script, swept
- `rb`—adverb, blurbl, curb, disturb, herb, superb, urban, verb
- `rg(e)`—emerge, gargle, gorge, large, merge, splurge, urge
- `rk`—bark, clerk, dark, fork, park, shark, spark, stark, stork
- `rl`—curl, girl, hurl, pearl, snarl, swirl, twirl, whirl
- `rm`—arm, farm, fern, germ, inform, perform, storm, term, warm worm
- `rn`—barn, horn, corn, earn, horn, learn, return, torn, turn, worn, yarn
- `rp`—burp, chirp, sharp, slurf, tarp, warp
- `rs(e)`—course, curse, nurse, purs, reverse, universe, verse, worse

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**Magnetic Letters, continued**

**Chicka Chicka Tree**—If your child has read Chicka Chicka Boom Boom by Bill Martin Jr. (and if they haven’t they should!) this is a fun alternative to using magnetic letters on the refrigerator or a cookie sheet. You will need small coffee cans (metal), duct tape, brown paint and green felt or fun foam. Tape together 3 or 4 stacked coffee cans. Spray paint the cans brown. Use green felt to make the leaves of the coconut tree.

Alternatives: Instead of painting the cans you can cover them with wood grain adhesive shelf paper. Artificial ferns can be used for the palm leaves.

**Building Words**—Give your child a pile of letters and tell him to make and write as many words as he can.

**Scoop and Spell**—This activity teaches children to use onsets and rimes as a help in making words. Give each player 7 consonants and 3 vowels. They then use these letters to make as many words as they can. Each letter can only be used once in each word unless the player has more than one of the same letter.

**Feely Bag**—You will need a bag your child can not see through and magnetic letters. Put some letters in the bag. Have your child reach in the bag and pick a letter, keeping it in the bag. Ask her to feel the letter and guess what letter it is. If she is right she keeps the letter. If the child guesses incorrectly the letter stays in the bag. With younger children you can preview the letters before you put them in the bag.

**Stack & Change**—Spread out one or more sets of magnetic letters so each letter is visible. One Player builds a consonant-vowel-consonant word, such as cat, mop, but). Players then take turns stacking one letter on top of any one letter in the previous word to form a “real” word. Continue playing changing only one letter until a player cannot make a new word. The last player to form a word is the winner.
Phonemic Awareness

Phonemic Awareness is the ability to notice, think about and manipulate the individual sounds in words. It is the ability to understand that sounds in spoken language work together to make words.

Spotlight Sounds—You will need a flashlight for this activity. Sit with your child in a familiar, dark room. Make a letter sound and ask your child to shine the flashlight on an object that starts with that sound.

Guess My Rule—This game will help your child listen to words and note similarities and differences. One person chooses two words that follow a secret rule (short a sound, ends with a sound, rhymes with hat). The other person tries to guess the rule by asking “Does ____ fit your rule?”. When the person guesses the rule, switch roles.

Shake a Sound—You will need an egg carton for this activity. If the carton has openings on the top, tape a piece of paper over the openings to cover them. Write a consonant or blend in each cup of the carton. Have your child place a penny in the carton, close the lid and shake it. Open the carton and say the sound of the letter(s) on which the penny landed. Ask your child to say a word beginning with that sound.

Syllable I Spy—Review with your child how words can be divided into syllables. Cut a piece of paper into small strips and write a number from 1-4 on each strip. Put the strips in a bag or basket. The first player picks a slip of paper. He must come up with an object in the room for the other player to guess, but it must have the number of syllables written on the slip of paper he drew. He then gives a clue with the number of syllables and one other hint: “I spy something red with two syllables” or “I spy something you eat that has 3 syllables.”

Sound Swap—Start with a simple three-letter word like “can.” Change one of the sounds within the word (“can” becomes “cat.”) Take turns changing one sound at a time. This activity helps your child focus on the individual sounds within words.

Three-letter initial consonant blends and word examples
- **scr**—cram, scramble, scrap, scrape, scratch, scream, screw, scrub
- **shr**—shrank, shred, shriek, shrimp, shrine, shrank, shrub, shrug
- **spl**—splash, splatter, splendid, splint, splinter, split, splotch, splurge
- **spr**—sprain, sprang, spray, spread, spring, sprinkle, sprout, spruce
- **squ**—squabble, squad, square, squash, squal, squeak, squeeze
- **str**—straight, strange, strap, straw, stream, street, stripe, strong
- **thr**—thread, threat, three, thrill, throat, throne, through, throw, thrown

Initial consonant digraphs and word examples
- **ch**—chain, chance, chart, chief, child, ship, chop, chubby church
- **ph**—phantom, phase, pheasant, phone, photo, phrase, physician
- **qu**—quack, quake, quality, quart, queen, quick, quiet, quilt, quite
- **sh**—shark, sharp, she, shine, ship, shoe, shoot, show, shower, shut, shy
- **th**—than, thank, that, the, then, there, these, think, this, those, though
- **wh**—whale, what, wheat, when, where, which, while, whip, why

Final consonant digraphs and word examples
- **-ch**—beach, church, couch, each, inch, much, rich, teach, which
- **-ck**—black, clock, duck, kick, lock, quack, quick, rock, snack, stick
- **-gh**—cough, enough, laugh, rough, tough
- **-ng**—bang, bring, king, ring, song, spring, strong, thing, wind, young
- **-ph**—autograph, graph, Joseph, photograph, telegraph, triumph
- **-sh**—brush, cash, dish, fish, fresh, push, rash, splash, trash, wash, wish
- **-tch**—catch, crutch, ditch, latch, match, pitch, sketch, snatch, witch
- **-th**—bath, both, cloth, earth, fifth, growth, math, path, south, tooth
**Two-letter initial consonant blends and word examples**

bl—black, blanket, blade, bleach, bleed, blend, blind, block, blow  
br—bracelet, braid, brake, brave, bread, brick, bright, broom, brush  
cl—clam, clap, class, claw, clean, click, clock, closet, cloud, club  
cr—cracker, crash, crawl, crazy, creature, crib, crisp, cross, cry  
dr—dragon, draw, dream, dress, drink, drive, drop, drum, dry  
fl—flag, flake, flash, flat, flavor, flight, flip, float, floor, flop, flower, fly  
fr—freckle, free, freeze, fresh, frog, from, front, frost, froze, fruit, fry  
gl—glad, glance, glass, glide, glimpse, glitter, globe, glove, glue  
gr—grab, grade, grape, grass, great, green, grew, grip, grocery  
pl—place, plan, plane, planet, plastic, plate, play, plum, plus  
pr—practice, president, pretend, pretty, pretzel, prince, prize  
sc—scar, scare, scarf, scatter, science, scissors, scold, scoop, score  
sk—skate, skeleton, ski, skill, skin, skinny, skip, skirt, skull, skunk, sky  
sl—slam, slap, sled, sleep, sleeve, sleigh, slice, slipper, sloppy, slow  
sm—smack, small, smart, smash, smear, smell, smile, smoke, smooth  
sn—snack, snail, snake, snatch, sneak, sneeze, snoop, snow  
sp—space, spaghetti, sparkle, speak, special, spell, spend, spill, spy  
st—stage, stair, stay, steak, steal, stem, stone, stop, store, storm, story  
sw—swamp, swat, swear, sweat, sweater, sweet, swim, swing, swirl  
tr—traffic, trail, train, trap, travel, tray, treat, tree, triangle, trick, trip  
tw—tweet, tweezers, twelve, twenty, twice, twig, twin, twinkle, twist

**Phonemic Awareness, continued**

**Syllable Snake**—You will need a marker for each player. Draw a snake game board with about 25 spaces. Write one word on 20 or more small cards—a mix of 1, 2 and 3 syllable words. Add a few cards that say “Skip a turn” and “Extra turn.” Stack the cards face down. Players take turns reading a card (or having it read to them) and saying the number of syllables in the word. If correct, they move their marker ahead a number of spaces equal to the number of syllables. The first player to reach the end wins.

**Rounds of Sounds**—With your child, practice this chant and the sound rhythms to go with it:

*I’m thinking of a sound* (clap, clap)  
Let’s try a round (clap, clap)  
Ready, Set, Go (clap, clap)  
Continuing the same rhythm, with a word clue  
The sound is SH (clap, clap)  
Let’s try a round (clap, clap)  
Ready, Set, Go (clap, clap)  
My word is SHUT (clap, clap)

Your child then says another SH word, maintaining the rhythm and claps: My word is shout (clap, clap) Continue until a player misses saying a word by the time the clapping occurs.

Variation: Play with word families (rhyming words)

**Segmenting Toss**—You will need a ball for this activity. Say a word and ask your child to repeat the word, then say it again while separating the sounds. For each sound, he will toss the ball in the air. “cat” /c/ toss ball, /a/ toss ball, /t/ toss ball

**Say It Without**—Ask your child to say a word such as football. Then ask her to say it without the “f” (ootball). You can make it more challenging by working with blends—for example, say plate. Ask the child to say it without the “pl” (ate)... then say it without the “p” (late)
Phonemic Awareness, continued

Bead Slide—You will need a piece of yarn and some beads (an even number, such as 20) for this activity*. Thread beads onto the yarn and knot the ends so the beads don't slide off. Make the strand long enough that the beads can be pushed from one end to the other, with space in between the two sections, and with extra length so the ends can be tied to two objects. You will also need to make word cards with 2, 3 and 4 syllable words. Make some extra cards that say +1, +2, +3, -1 and -2. Place the cards in a face down pile. Tie the two ends of the yarn onto 2 full beverage containers so the yarn is taut. Divide the beads evenly between the two ends with a space in the middle. Players take turns turning over a card, having it read, then moving one bead from the other player’s side to their side for each sound in the word (c-a-t —1, 2, 3). If a player gets a number card she turns over another card and segments the sounds, but then takes (+) or gives (-) beads according to the number. When all cards have been read, the player with the most beads on his side wins the game.

* A pipecleaner can be used instead of yarn if the beads will fit on it.

Two-Phonemes: be, hay, he, she, me, they, boy, see, eight, tie, pie, my, mow, row, say, way, key, we, bye, guy, hi, why, lie, bow, Joe, low, sow, boo, do, moo, two, zoo, shoe

Three-Phonemes: cup, lake, pig, house, goat, hit, ant, mouse, rock, apple, pin, kick, cake, cup, coat, pan, can, ship, bag, bat, nine, tree, hat, red, rat, fly, shake, bug, room, map, rock, fish, sat, kite

Four-Phonemes: giraffe, snake, blame, truck, flag, table, snip, bunch, turkey, grass, puzzle, lamp, clap, broom, slop, rust

Beginning Sound Trip - Play “I'm going on a camping trip...” [or to the zoo, to school, etc.] Start the game by saying, “I'm going on a camping trip, and I'm going to bring a dog and a dandelion. What are you going to bring?” The child should think of something that also starts with the d sound. Remember, this game is all about sounds, not letters! For example, if the sound you chose is “sss”, and the child says, “circus,” that would be an appropriate answer.

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Examples of short vowel words

a—add, ant, back, bad, bag, bat, bath, black, cat, crab, crack, dad, fan, fat, flag, glass, half, ham, jam, lap, mad, man, math, math, map, nap, pan, pas, ran, rat, sad, scratch, splash, tag, tap, wag

e—bed, beg, bell, belt, cell, cent, chest, dent, desk, dress, egg, elf, help, hen, leg, melt, men, neck, nest, pest, pet, red, sell, send, shell, sled, smell, stem, step, ten, twelve, web, well, went, west, wet yel

i—big, bit, brick, chick, chin, chip, clip, crib, did, dig, dish, fish, inch, is, itch, kick, king, knit, list, milk, mitt, mix, pick, pig, pink, pit, rich, rip, ship, sink, spit, swing, thin, twig, ship, wig, win, witch, zip

o—blob, block, blond, bomb, box, chop, clock, cop, cot, dog, doll, dot, drop, fox, got, hop, job, knot, lock, lot, nat, odd, pond, pot, rob, rock, shock, shop, sob, sock, spot, stock, stop, top, toss, trot

u—brush, bug, bump, bun, bus, but, buzz, club, crumb, crust, cup, drum, dust, fun, fur, fuss, gulp, gun, hug, jump, mud, mug, must, nut, plum, punch, pup, rub, rug, run, shut, such, sum, sun, thumb, tub
Long i sound

| climate | advice  | blight | by    | applied |
| crisis  | bike    | bright | cry   | cried   |
| design  | bride   | flight | deny  | die     |
| dinosaur| dice    | high   | dry   | fried   |
| fiber   | exercise| light  | fly   | lie     |
| final   | fire    | lightning | fry | lied   |
| five    | ice     | midnight | July | pie     |
| idea    | knife   | might  | my    | tie     |
| idol    | like    | right  | pry   | tried   |
| island  | lively  | sigh   | rye   | tried   |
| library | mice    | sight  | shy   |         |
| pirate  | ninety  | slight | sky   |         |
| right   | rice    | thigh  | sly   |         |
| spiral  | slice   | tight  | spy   |         |
| title   | smile   | tighten| try   |         |
| triangle| write   | twilight| why  |         |

Long o sound

| cozy    | bone    | approach| below  | doe   | boulder |
| ghost   | broke   | boat    | blow   | goes  | dough   |
| grocery | close   | charcoal| bow    | Joe   | doughnut|
| hero    | cone    | cloak   | elbow  | foe   | doughy  |
| holy    | doze    | cocoa   | grow   | hoe   | poultry |
| motor   | froze   | coat    | low    | mistletoe | shoulder |
| ocean   | hole    | croak   | mow    | poem  | soul    |
| odor    | home    | float   | mow    | toe   | thorough|
| omit    | joke    | goat    | narrow | woe   |         |
| oval    | phone   | oat     | own    |       |         |
| polo    | pole    | leaf    | row    |       |         |
| slogan  | rose    | moat    | show   |       |         |
| tomato | smoke   | roast   | slow   |       |         |
| veto    | throne  | soak    | sparrow|       |         |
| yogurt  | whole   | soap    | tow    |       |         |
| zero    | woke    | throat  | willow |       |         |

Vowels

Short vowels, long vowels, r-controlled vowels, silent vowels, vowel combinations…although there are only 5 vowels (and y, which can be a vowel or a consonant!) there are many vowel skills young readers need to learn and practice.

I Spy a Vowel—Find something in the room that has either a short or long vowel sound. Say, “I spy something with a short ‘a’ sound.” Have your child guess the object.

Scrabble Vowels—Play a traditional game of scrabble using only short or long vowel words.

Bowling for Vowels—This game provides practice with vowel combinations. You will need 6 large, empty soda bottles with caps for this game, along with index cards, a sheet or clear, semi-stiff plastic (overhead projector transparency or the clear windows on boxed products) and clear packing tape*. A ball will also be needed. You can leave the bottles empty, or add a few inches of sand to each to make them harder to knock over. Cut up the plastic into six 4X1-1/2‖ pieces. Place one on the side of each bottle and tape the bottom and sides to create a pouch. Cut the index cards into 2-1/2 X 3" pieces. Make 6 piles of 6 cards. Label each set with a small number. Choose six words for each vowel combination:

- ea: leaf, bean, lead, treat, peak, seal, real, deal, cheap
- ai: rain, pain, stain, gain, main, drain
- ie: field, thief, chief, yield, grief, belief
- oo: soon, moon, balloon, noon, raccoon, loon, goon
- oo: see, tree, deep, creep, need, keep, green, sleep
- oa: boat, foam, goat, roam, float, throat, coat, moat

To play, start with the first set and place one card inside each bottle pouch. Line up the bowling pins in a triangle (3 in back, 2 in the center, 1 in front). Take turns bowling. Players earn a point for each pin knocked down and read correctly.

*Or use sticky notes—write the words for each vowel combination in a different color to differentiate the sets.
Crazy R’s—Make a set of Crazy R cards by writing r-controlled words on about 50 cards, one word per card. See “Connect 4 R’s” for a word list. Use four different colors to write, making about one-quarter of the words in each color. Also make 4 special cards which say Crazy R. Deal five cards to each player or seven cards if there are only two players. The unused cards are placed face down on the table, and the top card is turned up and placed beside the stock to start the discard pile. Each player in turn must either play a legal card face up on the top of the discard pile, or draw a card from the unused stock. The following plays are legal:

- If the top card of the discard pile is not a Crazy R card, you may play any card which matches the color or word of the previous card.
- A Crazy R card may be played on any card, and the player of the Crazy R card must call a color, which may be played next.
- If a Crazy R card is on top of the pile, the player may play any card of the color nominated by the person who played the Crazy R card.

The player must read the word on each card in order to place a card down. The first player who gets rid of all their cards wins.

Build a Fence—Write short and long vowel words on popsicle sticks, one word per stick. Make an equal number of short and long vowel sticks. You can concentrate on words with one vowel or use words with all 5 vowels. Put the sticks in a tall container. Designate one player as short vowels and one player as long vowels. Players take turns selecting a stick (without seeing the word on it). If a player chooses and reads a stick containing one of “their” vowel sounds, he keeps the stick and begins building a fence. If it is not the correct vowel sound, the stick in put back into the container and the sticks mixed up before the next player takes a turn. The first player to complete their fence (7 sticks) wins the game.
Connect 4 R’s—When a vowel is followed by an r, it makes a special sound. These are called r-controlled vowels:

- /ar/ sound as in car, guitar, Arthur
- /er/ sound as in care, bear, mare, score, aquarium
- /ir/ sound as in third
- /ûr/ sound as in turnip, spider, and beaver
- /or/ sound as in manor, author, brought, and orchard
- /er/ sound as in butter, cutter, and mother

You will need some coins, beans, pasta, or other game markers (2 different sets). Make a 6X4 (or larger) grid. Write one r-controlled vowel word in each space. Players take turns choosing a word to read. If the word is read correctly, the player can put a marker on it. The first player to get 4 in a row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally) wins the game.

Variation: You will need two dice for this game. Make a 6X6 grid, labeled with row and column numbers. Write in r-controlled words, as above. On each turn the player rolls the dice and uses the numbers to form an ordered pair (3, 4). The player then reads the word in that square. If successful, he can place a marker. If the space is already taken, he rolls again. The first player to get 3 in a row wins.

Some r-controlled words are: sir, her, hurt, girl, germ, first, firm, turn, burn, curl, curb, fur, bird, dirt, stir, shirt, swirl, fern, surf, chirp, thirst, spur, third, burst, car, corn, stir, sport, far, storm, park, card, shark, for, nurse, barn, bark, sister, yard, turn, art, part, sharp, jar, scar, yarn, part, party, porch, jerk, third, short, turtle.

Wheel of Fortune Vowels—Print a short saying, such as a common phrase or a line from a song or poem. Leave blank spaces where the vowels should be. Ask your child to fill in the blanks with the appropriate vowels or vowel combinations, giving hints as necessary.
Vowels, continued

Fiddle Sticks—You will need popsicle sticks and a tall container. On each stick, write one word from a silent e pair. For example, you might write pin or pine, but not both. Make an equal number of sticks with words with and without the silent e. Make 3 sticks with “fiddle sticks” written instead of a word from the list. You can change the number of fiddle sticks depending on how many word sticks you play with. Players take turns choosing a stick, reading the word, then saying the word with or without the e, whichever is not on the stick. If the correct, the player keeps the stick and can take another turn if she wants to. But...if a player pulls a Fiddle Stick she says Fiddle Sticks! and must return all her sticks to the cup. Play continues until the time is up (set a timer for about 10 minutes). The player with the most sticks wins.

Pin the Tail of the Silent E—You will need a large piece of paper or posterboard for this activity, along with velcro*. Choose 20 silent e words and write them in large letters, in columns, on your paper. Leave a space after each word and put a small piece of velcro where the e will go. Be sure to leave space between words vertically. Cut 20 more squares, each 2” square and write an e on one side of each. Stick the opposite side of the velcro on the other side. Fasten the paper to the wall at a good height for your child. Make a line on the other side of the room for players to stand behind, Each player/team should place 10 e cards on the floor near the line. To play, players start behind the line, pick up an e card and run to the poster, where they must read a word, add the e and read the new word. The first player/team to use all their e cards wins.

* If you do not have velcro you can make a single use board. Write the words as directed above, leaving a space after each word. Give each child a crayon and have them run up, read a word, add an e then read the new word. Variation: One child can play this game as a beat the clock activity.

Miscellaneous Skills, continued

Roll & Write—You will need a die, small place markers and cards with alphabet letters for this game. Make an extra card for each vowel. Place the letter cards in random order in a circular path. Give each player a counter and paper and pencil. Players choose a letter and place their counter on it, writing the letter on their piece of paper. Then they take turns rolling one or two dice and move around the board. Wherever the marker lands, the player writes down that letter. The first player to make a three-letter word using their letters wins. Older children can work to form four or five letter words.

Reading Treasure Hunt—Hide a small treat for your child. This can be an object or a note (Get an extra half hour on the computer today!, You may stay up 15 minutes past bedtime). Write directions to the prize on a series of slips of paper and hide them around the house - Look under the sofa, Check under your bed. Open your favorite book, etc. Then ask your child to write a treasure hunt for you.

Connect Three Compound Words—This is a two-player game, but a third person is needed to help. The person not playing the game should draw a four by four grid (16 boxes) on a piece of paper. Number each box 1-16. On a separate sheet of paper that only the non-player can see, assign each box the first or last half of a compound word. You do not want the players to know what word they are getting when they pick a box. Each player picks a color or symbol they will use for the game. The goal of the game is to get three markers in a row—vertically, horizontally or diagonally. When it is a player’s turn, he picks a number where he wants to put his mark. The non-player then tells him the corresponding half of a compound word. He must then say the other half of the word. For example, if the reader says “book” he must say “book” and a matching compound word—bookmark, bookcase, etc. If correct, he can mark that square. The first player to get three a row is the winner! Variation: Make a seven (across) by six (up and down) grid. Players can only choose the lowest unclaimed space in a column.
Miscellaneous Skills, continued

**Contraction Concentration**—A contraction is an abbreviated form of two words (can’t, she’ll, didn’t). Make a list of contractions and the words that make them up. Then write the contractions on index cards. Repeat with the list of the words that make up each contraction. You will have 2 cards for each word; for example, can’t and can not. Turn the cards face down and lay them out in rows and columns. Players take turns turning over two cards at a time. The object is to find the correct two words that make up it’s matching contraction. If a match is made the player removes the cards and takes another turn. If no match is made the cards are turned back over after all players have read them. The player who collects the most pairs wins.

**Variation:** For an easier game make each type of card on different colored paper (contractions on one color, base words on another). When players turn over cards, they turn over one of each color.

**Homonym Beanbag Toss**—This is an outdoor game. You will need pavement you can write on, sidewalk chalk and 3-5 beanbags (or baggies filled with pasta, then taped shut). Homonyms are words which sound the same but are spelled differently (hear/here and to/two/too, see/sea, their/they’re/there, for example). Write several homonym words on the pavement. Place each word in a different size box—some big, some medium and others small. Measure a few yards back from the word boxes and make a line. Decide how many throws each player will get (younger children can be given more throws than older players). Players stand behind the line and try to cover all the boxes for one homonym. A small box counts three points, a medium one two points and a large box one point. Any match of two homonyms gives 5 bonus points; a set of three matching homonyms is worth 10 bonus points.

**Label Scavenger Hunt**—Have each player look through the cupboards and write down 10 words or phrases from the labels on boxes and cans. Exchange lists and try to be the first person to find labels that match every item on the list.

**Silent e Concentration**—On small pieces of paper make game cards with pairs of words which demonstrate the silent e principle. Each card should have one word, so there will be 2 cards for each set of words (her/her, can/cane). The more pairs of cards you make (or choose to play with) the more challenging the game will be. Make four extra cards—three What word am I? and one “Skip a turn.” To play, shuffle the cards and place them in a grid between players. Players take turns turning over two cards. If they are a pair (the same base word with and without the e) the player keeps the cards and gets another turn. If they are not a match, they are turned back over after all players have read them and it is the next player’s turn. If a What word am I? card is turned over, the player can make a match to another card by naming the other word in the pair. When all possible pairs have been made, the player with the most pairs wins.

**Matching Vowels**—With your child, list four words for each vowel—two that have the long vowel sound and two that have the short vowel sound. Write each word on a card. You will have 20 cards. Mix the cards and lay them facedown in rows. Play a memory game. Players take turns turning over two cards and reading the words (or having them read to them). If the two cards represent the same vowel sound (for example, long o) the player takes the cards. If no match is made they are turned back over. When all the cards have been removed the player with the most sets wins.

**Magic e Go Fish**—Make a deck of at least 20 pairs of silent e word pairs, with one word on each card (car and care would be one pair, but on two different cards). To play, give each player 5 cards. The remaining cards are placed in a face down pile. The first player takes a turn by asking another player if he has a matching card—he must name the word he is seeking (i.e., player has “kit” and asks another player if he/she has “kite”). If the player makes a match, the match is placed on the table and he gets another turn. If there is not match the player takes a card from the facedown pile. If it is a match, the pair can be put down. If not, the player adds the card to his hand. The player with the most matches wins the game.
Sight Words / High Frequency Words

Sight Words [also called Dolch or High Frequency Words] are a list of words that readers are encouraged to recognize without having to "figure them out." Some of these words cannot be sounded out because they do not follow decoding rules.

- 12 Sight Words make up 25% of those we read and write.
- 100 Sight Words make up 50% of those we read and write.

Jumping Words—You will need 12 pieces each of two different kinds of coins, buttons or pasta for this game. Draw a checker board, but write a sight word on each square. Play as you would checkers, adding the rule that a player must correctly read word before moving to it. To make your checker board more versatile, write three words on each square. Before beginning the game, decide if you will be playing with the top, middle or bottom words.

Sight Word Hockey—Take a berry basket and cut off one side to make a hockey goal. Write sight words on milk jug lids or bottle caps. Have your child read a sight word. If correct he has the chance to "shoot" the word puck into the goal by flicking it with his finger.

Pick Up Phonics—Write sight words on popsicle sticks. You can write a different word on each side. One player picks up all of the sticks in a vertical bundle and drops them. She must then pick up one of the sticks, without moving any of the others, and read the word that was face up. The player can continue to pick up sticks as long as she reads the words and doesn’t move another stick; otherwise, it is the next player’s turn. Count the number of sticks each player has at the end of the game. Play again, with the other player going first. Add the scores for the two games to determine the winner.

Variations: This game can be used for other skills—for example, ask the player to use the word in a sentence, give a rhyming word, name a synonym, etc.

Miscellaneous Skills, continued

Compound Fish—Make a set of compound word parts using this list or your own list: life, time, can, not, cross, walk, moon, light, any, body, mean, back, ground, bath, room, break, fast, dream, down, town, up, stairs, some, butter, fly, fire, thing, one, else, where, base, ball, day, up, side, no, air, plane, bed, time. The goal of this Go Fish style game is to collect as many compound words as possible. Shuffle the cards and give each player 6 cards. Put the remaining cards in a facedown pile. Players take turns looking at their cards and asking another player for cards. For example, if a player has the word bed in her hand, she might ask "Do you have any cards that go with bed?" If the other player has such a card (or cards) he gives it to the her. If the player receives a card, it is still her turn, and she can ask for another card. But if a player asks for a card her opponent doesn’t have the opponent says "Go build" and the player takes the top card from the facedown pile. If she can make a word she does so. If not the card is added to her hand. Play passes to the next player. The first player to put down all her cards wins.

Variation: Play until all possible matches are made. If a player puts down her last card, she should take 3 more from the facedown pile.

Aunt Tilly—This game requires players to use a wide variety of skills. One player begins by telling everyone about Aunt Tilly. For example:

- Aunt Tilly likes pepper but she doesn’t like salt
- She loves coffee but hates tea
- She likes sleeping but hates going to bed

The other players try to get more clues about Aunt Tilly by asking questions "Does Aunt Tilly like soup?" The first player might reply "She hates soup but loves eating with a spoon."

The clues and answers are based on a secret code only player one knows—in this case Aunt Tilly only likes words with double letters. Other criteria might be words that start or end with a certain letter, contain a certain vowel, have a silent e, have 2 syllables, etc. The first player to guess the rule is the next to give the clues.
**Miscellaneous Skills**

**Word Builder**—Write down root words that can be made into other words by adding a prefix. Write these words onto cards. Then, do the same thing with prefixes that can combined with the root words. You will need to make more than one of each prefix—for example, using the word list below, you would make one card each of stop and sense but 2 of non-. Mark the back of each card to identify it as a base or prefix card. Shuffle each stack and place each face down. Players take turns taking the top card in each pile and checking to see if they form a word. If so, the player keeps the cards. If the cards are not a match, they go in a discard pile. When all the cards in the original pile have been used, sort and shuffle the discarded cards to make new piles. The player who collects the most pairs wins.

**Variation:** Make cards with suffixes instead of prefixes.

Examples of prefixes and base words:
- **dis**—agree, respect, honest, card
- **im**—proper, perfect, polite, balance
- **pre**—pay, heat, caution, view
- **mis**—behave, mismatch, misprint, misplace
- **un**—aware, sure, happy, common, popular

**Prefix/Suffix Detective**—Give each player a newspaper and a highlighter (or light colored marker). Set a timer for 5 minutes. During that time, players search for and highlight words containing a prefix or suffix. When time is up, switch papers to check accuracy and count the words each detective found. The player with the most words wins.

**Post-It Bingo**—You will need post-it notes and some place markers (coins, beans) for this activity. Write 16 sight words on small pieces of paper. Give each player some post-it notes. Each player writes each word on a post-it note. Players then arrange their notes in a 4X4 array. Shuffle the stack of word cards and place them face down. The first player turns over the top word card and reads it aloud. Players then put a marker on their matching post-it note. Play continues until one player gets three in a row. For a more challenging game, make more than 16 word cards and allow players to choose which 16 they will use for their game board.

**Hidden Sight Words**—Before riding in the car, pick a few sight words and have your child write them down. See if either of you can spy the words on the signs you pass.

**Sight Word Puzzler**—You will need a jigsaw puzzle for this activity. Spread out the puzzle pieces, face down. Write a sight word on the back of each piece. Now, have your child put the puzzle together. After he reads a word on a puzzle piece, he may flip it over to look at the image and add it to the puzzle. If he cannot read a word, tell him what it is but leave it face down so he can come back to it later.

**Sight Word Island Hopping**—This is an outdoor game. You will need sidewalk chalk. On one end of a paved area, draw a circle big enough for a few players to stand. This is Shelter Island. At the other end of the paved area draw a line—this is the mainland. Draw a series of “islands” (approximately 12” blobs) between the mainland and Shelter Island. Have your child write a sight word on each island. Draw enough islands so that there can be several routes to Shelter Island. Ask your child to draw crocodiles around the islands to make Crocodile Sea. Write out five or more routes of about 4 words each from the mainland to Shelter Island. To play, pull out a card, call out a route and let your child hop from word to word. How fast can your child make it? For more sight word practice, ask your child to write out (or call out) a route for you to hop.
Sight Words / High Frequency Words, continued

Sight Word Jenga—You will need small, rectangular blocks for this activity. You can either write directly on the blocks or tape words onto each block. Taping allows you to change the words as your young reader progresses. Write a sight word on each block. Stack the blocks up into a tower, reading each word aloud as you place it. Players take turns attempting to pull out one block from the tower without knocking the tower over. Players read each word as the block is removed. The first person to make the tower fall loses the game.

Fish Me a Sight Word—You will need construction paper, yarn, a popsicle stick, glue and magnets for this activity. For the magnets, you can cut up old magnetic business cards or purchase small magnets at a craft store. Cut fish shapes out of the paper. Write one sight word on each fish. Attach a paperclip to the mouth of each fish. Tie the yarn to the popsicle stick. Tie a magnet to the other end of the string. Spread out all of the fish on the floor. Give your child the fishing rod. Call out words and have your child try to catch that fish. After the fish is caught ask your child to spell and read the word.

Sight Word Swat—On a large plastic tablecloth or shower curtain liner, print a variety of sight words. Give each player a fly swatter.* Call out a word and have the players race to swat the word first.

* If you don’t have clean fly swatters, have players slap the word.

Word Gamble—You will need a die for this game. Write sight words on small cards and place the cards in a facedown stack. Set a time limit for each round. Players take turns rolling the die and, one at a time, turning over that many word cards. If he reads the word, he keeps the card. Play a predetermined number of rounds. The player with the most cards is the winner.

Writing / Storytelling, continued

Unfortunately / Fortunately—Someone starts with a made-up sentence and each player in turn ad libs the next line, alternating unfortunate and fortunate events. For example:
1st person: Yesterday Patti went to the beach.
2nd person: Unfortunately it started to rain.
3rd person: Fortunately it was raining money.
4th person: Unfortunately the money was in the form of coins and it hurt when they rained down on Patti’s head.
5th person: Fortunately she was wearing a construction helmet.
6th person: Unfortunately the helmet was magnetic, and all of the coins stuck to it.
The game goes on for as long as you want it to.

Alphabet Stories—Work with your child to see if you can write a simple story using sentences that each contain words that start with the same letter of the alphabet. For example, An ant ate apples at Alaska’s arctic area. Next add a b sentence, then c, etc. Or randomly choose the order of the letters you use.

or Take turns adding a word to a story—but each player has to use the next letter of the alphabet: Annie brought Crystal’s daughter eleven frogs, giving her ..... or Another boy crawled down even farther, going headfirst into Jill’s ..... A player can keep going as long as she follows this rule, and gets one point for every word used. A new sentence can be started at any time, but the appropriate letter must be used.

or Place scrabble tiles or letter cards facedown between players. A player can keep telling a story and earning cards as long as she can continue the story with a word starting with the letter picked up.

Variations:
Roll a die to determine the number of letters a player will pick up on that turn. The player can use them in any order.
Use cards with beginning blends, in addition to single letter cards.
Writing / Storytelling, continued

Falling Words—On index cards, write words your child can read. Include nouns (people, places, things), adjectives (descriptive words) and verbs (action words). Include some silly words like squishy and hippopotamus! Ask your child to begin telling a story. Toss a few cards into the air. Challenge your child to quickly pick up the words, read them, and use them to add to his story. Continue tossing a few cards at a time until he has finished his story.

It's in the Bag—You will need a large paper bag, or pillowcase for this activity. Ask each participant to secretly collect small objects to put in the bag. When everyone has added their objects, one person starts a story. He continues for about 30 seconds, then the next player pulls an object out of the bag and must continue the story for another 30 seconds, incorporating that object into the story.

Spinning Yarns – You will need a ball of yarn with knots every 3-5 feet. The first person begins telling a story as they slowly unwind the yarn. When they reach a knot the next person continues the story.

The Other Perspective – Take a familiar story and re-create the story from another character’s perspective. For example, the Three Bears could be told from Baby Bear’s perspective. Or Red Riding Hood could be told from the wolf’s perspective.

Character Change – Have students take a story they know and give the main character a personality that is not in the story. What if Goldilocks were whiny or hyperactive? What if she was a singer?

Mad Libs—Ask your child to write a short story, using a pencil. He should leave a space between lines. When he is finished, go through the story, erase some words, and replace them with ______. Underneath the line write the type of word that belongs there (verb, noun, number, etc.) Ask your child to name random words to fit the category in each space, then have him read the new story.

Sight Words / High Frequency Words, continued

4 in a Row—You will need a standard 1-6 die for this game, along with two different sets of buttons, coins or beans for markers. Make a 6X6 table and write a sight word in each square. Number each row of squares 1-6 left to right. Players take turns rolling the die and picking any word with that number to read. If the word is read correctly the player can place a marker on that square. The first player to get 4 markers in a row (vertically, horizontally or diagonally) wins.

Flip It Down—You will need two dice for this game. Create game boards by making a 2 column, 12 row table for each player. Space the words so the list fills the length of the page. Number the left hand column and for each player write different words in this column. Leave the right hand rows blank. Cut the right hand column on the rows so that each is on a strip of paper that can be folded over to the left. Players take turns rolling a die and adding the numbers together. The player then reads the word that corresponds to the number they roll. If successful they “flip down” the word by folding it over. If a player rolls doubles (two of the same number) she can read any word. (This allows players to read the number 1 word, and speeds up the game). The first player to flip down all of the words is the winner.

Zap! – You will need craft (popsicle) sticks for this activity. Write one word on the end of each stick. For every 25 sticks, add three sticks that say ZAP! Players take turns pulling a stick out of a cup. If they can read it, they keep it. If they can’t, they put it back in the cup after having it read to them. If they get “zapped” they put all of their sticks back in the cup. At the end of a set time (about 5 minutes), the winner is the one with the most sticks.
Sight Words / High Frequency Words, continued

Stack a Word—On a piece of heavy paper, make a horizontal grid—4 columns using solid lines and 3 rows using dotted lines. Write a word in each square. Cut on the solid lines to make 4 strips of three words. Fold each strip into a triangle (don’t tape closed). Make at least 4 of these pages. To play, put all the folded strips in a bag. Players take turns pulling out a triangle and trying to read all three words. If successful, the player adds to a tower of word triangles. The player who stacks a card and makes the tower fall down loses the game.

Word Baseball—Draw a baseball diamond with 3 bases and homeplate on a piece of paper. Write sight words on round pieces of paper. Add a few cards which say “extra base,” “homerun” and “out.” Stack the word “balls” in a facedown pile. You will also need coins or buttons to use as place markers. The first player, the pitcher, picks up a card and shows it to the second player, the “hitter.” If the second player reads the word correctly he advances one base. If incorrect the batter receives an out and the card is placed at the bottom of the pile. After three outs or two runs, switch roles. If an adult is playing with a child, the adult is allowed only one out per inning.

Word Detective—Make word cards with one commonly used sight word on each. Each player chooses a word card and a book, newspaper or magazine. The player has 5 minutes to find, point out and read the word each time she finds it. Adults or more skilled readers can be given a shorter time to make the game competitive.

Takeaway Words—Write 10 sight words on small cards, one word per card. Arrange the cards in a pyramid – 1 on the top row, 2 below it, 3 under them, and 4 on the bottom. Players take turns reading and removing any one, two, or three cards from a single row at a time. The student who takes the last card is the loser. You can use 15 cards by adding a row or 5.

Nutty Nursery Rhymes—Choose a nursery rhyme or poem. Line by line, change the story. For example, instead of Mary having a little lamb, she could have a giant ham. Encourage your child to make themselves or their family and friends characters in the story.

Story Swap—Choose two familiar stories. Fairytales work well for this activity. Ask your child to pick a character from one story and pretend that she appears in the other. For example, how would “The Three Little Pigs” be different if Little Red Riding Hood were in it? What if, instead of the grandmother being sick, one of the pigs is sick, so Little Red Riding Hood takes the pig a basket of goodies?

Fairy Tale Toss—You will need 4 dice (make your own with the pattern provided in the back of the booklet, or cover the numbers on existing dice). Write these words/phrases on the sides of the dice:
- bear, boy, girl, cat, queen, king
- large, small, old, new, messy, clean
- hut, house, castle, cave, city, farm
- the store, a friend’s house, Grandma’s house, into the woods, into town, to the park

Begin your story with “Once upon a time there was a...” then roll the first die. Whatever character lands on top is now your main character for the story. Insert the character into the story. For example, if the die lands with the cat on top: “Once upon a time there was a cat...” Continue the story like this: “...who lived in a very...” Roll the second die and use the descriptive word which lands on top: “Once upon a time there was a cat who lived in a very messy...” Roll the third die and add the type of residence. For example, “Once upon a time there was a cat who lived in a very messy hut.” Continue the story like this: “One day the cat decided to go...” Roll the fourth die and insert whatever lands on top. For example, “Once upon a time there was a cat that lived in a very messy hut. One day the cat decided to go into town.” Put the dice to the side and ask your child to continue the story from there asking her leading questions such as, “What do you think might happen next?”
Writing / Storytelling, continued,

Roll a Story—You will need a die for this activity. Have your child write the first sentence of a story, then roll the die. If she rolls
1: add a character
2: something bad happens
3: something good happens
4: the character changes location
5: the time changes in the story
6: any sentence is added

Mix and Match Story—Using a ruler, take 10 pieces of paper and divide each into six even sections. Have your child write a very simple story, using six sentences, with a sentence in each section:
1st sentence: character introduction (“Once upon a time there was a princess”...”A little girl named Marlene lived in a far away land”)
2nd sentence: where the character lived (“He lived in a huge jungle”...”Her home was a beautiful castle”).
3rd sentence: describes a special talent of the character (“She could jump higher than anyone else”...”He could tell amazing stories”).
4th sentence: describes the character’s feelings; “He was a very lonely boy”...”She was very sad because she didn’t have a friend”).
5th sentence: tells how the character solved the problem (“So she made cookies for everyone in the village”...”He learned how to take care of the animals and help them.”)

Write a story on each piece of paper and number the sections on each page 1-5. Now cut the sections of each page, stack them by number and shuffle each stack. Read the top sentence in each stack and see what wacky combinations you have created.

Pass It On—Ask your child to look through old magazines and find an interesting picture. Have him write a paragraph about the person, animal, place of thing in the picture. Then have the first writer pass the picture and first paragraph to another person. Ask them to add to the paragraph then pass it on to another person. The next person adds a few sentences and passes it along, and so on, and so on, until the story is complete. Read the story you have created.

Sight Words / High Frequency Words, continued

Cracked-up Words—in an egg carton, write a different sight word in 10 of the cups. In the last two cups draw a cracked egg (It is best if they are not close together). Players take turns placing the object in the carton, closing it, shaking the carton, opening it and reading the word where the object landed. As long as he doesn’t get a broken egg, the player can choose to continue to play, getting one point for each word read correctly. However, if the object lands on a broken egg before he decides to end his turn, the player loses all his points for that round. Play until one person gets 12 points.

Snowball Fight—the more people (or teams) who play this game, the more fun it is. Write words on scrap paper, then wad each paper up to make a snowball. Divide the snowballs between players. Players stand in different corners of the room. “Let it snow!” is the cue to begin throwing snowballs at each other. But... before a player can throw a snowball they must open the paper and read the word. They can then wad it up again and throw it. Continue until someone yells “Freeze.” Each player picks up the snowballs in their area and counts them. The player/team with the least amount wins.

Bonus Basket Game—you will need a lightweight ball and a wastebasket for this game. Make small cards with words on them. Players take turns turning over a card. If he reads it correctly, the player gets a point. Then he has a chance to throw the ball in the basket. If the ball goes in, he scores an extra point. Move the basket a little farther away for each round.

Fun Fonts—On the computer, type a sight word. Ask your child to retype the word underneath, using different colors, fonts and sizes.

What’s Missing?—Display a sight word card. Ask your child to make the word below the card with magnetic letters or alphabet caps. Have your child close her eyes while you remove a letter, closing the gap. When your child opens her eyes, she tell you what letter is missing and where it needs to go. For more of a challenge, remove the word card along with the missing letter.
What Do You Notice? - Place 2 sight word cards down. Ask your child: What do you notice? How are they alike? How are they different?

Word Spin — If you have a spinning top or dreidel, you can play this game. Write sight words on small cards. Have your child spin the top. Ask her to read the word on the card before the top stops.

Oh, no! - Put sight word cards in a bag, along with a few cards that read, “Oh, no!” Players take turns pulling out a word card. If he can read it, he can keep the card. If not, he puts it back. If he pulls out an “Oh, no!” card he has to put 3 words back. (If a player has less than 3 all his cards go back in the bag). Who can collect the most words?

Concentration — Make sight word cards—two of each word. Shuffle the cards and place them face down between players. Players take turns turning over two cards and reading the words. If the words are the same, they keep the cards and get another turn. If the words are different, they are turned back over after being read aloud.

Which Word Wins? - Sit with your child and look at a newspaper or magazine. Choose a sight word and an article from the paper. Highlight or color the word each time it appears. Try the same thing with a second sight word. Which word appears more often?

Writing and Storytelling

Roll Those Words — You will need four dice or wooden or paper cubes for this activity. On one die write articles and pronouns: a, the, this, that, one, all. Write nouns on the second die: bear, horse, dog, cat, bird and lion. On the third die write verbs: was, seems, feels, looked, yelled, hugged. On the last die write adjectives: big, brown, happy, hungry, pretty, yellow. Have your child roll the four dice and read each word that lands face up. Help her arrange the words to make a sentence that makes sense (you may need to make a few changes—All the horses instead of All the horse, etc. If a part of the sentence doesn’t make sense, re-roll that die. Keep rolling until you have four different sentences.

Word Scramble Game — On small cards, write 20 each of your child’s favorite nouns (person, place or thing words: Jessica, Africa), verbs (action words—jump, ran), adverbs (words that modify verbs—very, quickly), and adjectives (words that modify nouns—tall, unhappy). Add a dozen articles (the, a, but, when, why, how, with, that). Put the cards in a bag, shake them up and dump them out. See how many sentences (crazy or not) your child can make in 2 minutes.

Crazy Headlines — Clip headlines from old newspapers. Cut the words apart. Who can create the goofiest headline? For more fun, write or tell a story to go with your crazy headline.

The Liar’s Contest — Read a tall tale such as Paul Bunyan. Have players create tall tales of their own. The details of the story should be realistic enough to believe but the story itself should be made up. Hold a contest to determine who can tell the “tallest” tale with enough realism in the storytelling to make it (almost) believable.

Picture Tales — Ask your child to cut twenty or more pictures out of a magazine. Suggest she include pictures of people, places and things. Put the pictures in a bag and have each person pull out 3 or 4 and write a story using as many of the pictures as possible. Or, write a giant silly story together, using all the pictures in the order they are pulled out of the bag.
Spelling, continued

Raft Race—This game is similar to Word Match. Make a list of about 15 words (the list should have an odd number of words). You will need 2 popsicle sticks or strips of tag board for every word. Write one half of a spelling word per stick. To play, place the sticks facedown. Players take turns turning over two sticks. A player who turns over a matching pair keeps the sticks and places them side by side to build a “raft.” The player who ends the game with the largest raft wins.

Climb the Mast—This activity requires a long stick and three people - two players and a caller. The caller says a spelling word. If Player 1 spells the word correctly, he or she grabs the mast (stick) bottom with one hand. If Player 2 spells the next word correctly, he or she grabs the mast just above Player 1’s hand. As players spell words, they move their hands up the mast. If they misspell a word, they cannot move. The player who reaches the top of the mast first wins the game.

What’s the Question? - Make a word card for each spelling word and stack the cards facedown. Player 1 draws a card and gives a clue for the word. The clue must be a statement (“It goes up in space.”) Player 2 tries to earn a point by asking a question that includes the word and spelling the word correctly (“What is a rocket? r-o-c-k-e-t”). Players take turns. The one who earns the most points wins the game.

30 Second Words—Write a spelling word at the top of a sheet of paper. Have your child time you while you write the word as many times as you can in 30 seconds. Can your child beat your score?

Word Search—Ask your child to write down his spelling words on the bottom part of two pieces of graph paper (or make hand drawn grids on the top two-thirds of plain pieces of paper.) Each of you takes a completed list and above it, on the grid, creates a word search by writing the words vertically, horizontally or diagonally (and backwards for older kids). Fill in the blank spaces with miscellaneous letters. Switch papers and see who can find all of the words first.

Sight Words / High Frequency Words, continued

Roll & Read—You will need a die for this activity. Make a list of sight words. Players take turns rolling the die and then trying to read that number of words on the list. Every correctly read word earns a point. With players of mixed abilities, the more skilled player should re-roll any time a 5 or 6 is rolled.

Sight Word Detective—You will need Scrabble tiles for this activity.* One player is the Detective and the other is the Letter Thief. The Letter Thief spells out a sight word using Scrabble tiles. The Detective turns around while the Letter Thief removes one letter. The Detective then has to tell what letter was stolen. Variation: The Letter Thief can scramble all the letters. The detective must rearrange them to form the word again.

Sight Word Creator—You will need Scrabble letters for this activity.* Make a list of sight words with your child. Divide the Scrabble tiles randomly among players. Each player tries to create as many words on the list as possible, using their letters. The player who forms the most words wins. Variation: Add up the value of each word formed and keep score. The player with the most points wins.

*If you do not have a Scrabble game you can make your own tiles on cardboard squares. Scrabble contains 100 letter tiles, in the following distribution:

- 2 blank tiles (scoring 0 points)
- 1 point: E ×12, A ×9, I ×9, O ×8, N ×6, R ×6, T ×6, L ×4, S ×4, U ×4
- 2 points: D ×4, G ×3
- 3 points: B ×2, C ×2, M ×2, P ×2
- 4 points: F ×2, H ×2, V ×2, W ×2, Y ×2
- 5 points: K ×1
- 8 points: J ×1, X ×1
- 10 points: Q ×1, Z ×1
CVC Words

CVC (consonant—vowel—consonant) words are three letter words which start and end with a consonant and have a vowel in the middle. These are the first type of words children learn to read. Their simplicity makes them ideal for practicing letter substitution.

Phonics Flip Chart—You can make your own phonics flip chart from a small wirebound notebook (paper or index card style). Cut the pages into three equal sections, as shown. Write consonants on the first and third sections (skip q, x and z). If you have extra pages, you can repeat letters. Write vowels on the center section, repeating to fill all the pages. Ask your child to mix and match the pages, sound out the word formed, and decide if it is a real word.

CVC Bakery — You will need a mixing bowl, spoon and plate for this activity. Using cardboard or paper, make squares (1 to 1-1/2”). Write the alphabet on the squares, one letter per square. Write the same letter on the front and back of each square. Cut the squares apart. Make two extra sets of vowels. Make a list of CVC words (cat, hat, tip, sip, bed, red, hop, top, hut, cut). This is the menu. Place your order and have your child prepare the word and serve it to you.

Tic Tac Word—Draw a tic tac toe board and give each player a different color crayon. The first player puts a vowel in the center space. The second player adds a letter to one of the other spaces. It is then the first player’s turn again, and she adds a letter to another space. The goal is to be the first to create a real 3 letter word.

Stretch and Say—You will need wide elastic for this activity. Cut the elastic into 3-4” strips. Write a one-syllable CVC word (dad, kid, mom, sit, pat) on each piece of elastic. Have your child hold one end of the elastic. As he gently stretches it out, have him stretch out the sound for each letter. After stretching out the last sound he can let the elastic shrink back and read the word.

Spelling, continued

Password—The goal of this two-person game is to guess the password using clues from previous guesses. Make a list of 10 or more spelling words. Player 1 secretly picks a word to be the password. Player 2 tries to guess which word from the list is the password. They may look at the list while they do this. If they pick the wrong word player 1 tells player 2 how many of the same letters are in the same place (for example, if the password is ‘stapler’ and player 2 picked ‘sticker’ then player 2 got 4 letters that are the same. (S, T, E and R - but player 1 does not tell player 2 what the specific letters are.) If player 2 guesses correctly it’s then their turn; if they guess incorrectly player 1 says how many letters are the same and player 2 has another turn. Player 2 only gets three guesses before they get “Denied Access.” Another word is then chosen and the game starts again.

Word Match— Make a list of about 30 words. You will need 2 cards for every word. Write one part of a spelling word per card. Players then try to match cards to make spelling words. Each player is dealt five cards; the rest are used as a draw pile. Player 1 asks Player 2 for a card to match a word in his or her hand. If Player 2 does not have the card, Player 1 draws a new card. Players who make a match (by asking or by drawing) lay down those cards and take another turn. The player with the most matches at the end of the game wins.

Word Spell—You will need beanbags. Baggies filled with packing peanuts and taped shut, or other tossable objects and sidewalk chalk for this outside game. Draw a giant keyboard on pavement and fill in the letters following the layout of a keyboard (or write the letters in alphabetical order in 3 rows). Players take turns choosing a word for the other player to spell. Standing 6 feet away from the letters, the active player tosses the beanbags, attempting to land them on the letters of the word, in order. The number of throws it takes in excess of the number of letters in the word is the player’s score. When all the words have been spelled, the player with the lowest score wins.
Spelling, continued

**Spelling Magic**—Give your child a white crayon and white paper. Have her write the words, then paint over the paper with watered down tempera or watercolor paint. The words will appear like magic.

**Font-astic Spelling Words**—Ask your child to type out his spelling word 10 times, each in a different font, color and size.

**Karate Spelling**—Write one word each, in large letters, on a sheet of paper. Hold the words up one at a time. As your child spells the word, he should punch up high for tall letters (b, d, f, h, k, l, t), punch out in front for short letters (a, c, e, i, m, n, o, r, s, u, v, w, x, z), and give a kick for letters that go below the line (g, j, p, q, y). When finished, he should fold his hands together and bow as he says the word.

**Mute Spelling**—In this game players try to spell words without saying any vowels. Players take turns saying or reading a word. The other player must spell the word by saying the consonants but using the correct symbol in place of any vowels:

- **A** Hold up your right hand
- **E** Hold up your left hand
- **I** Point to your eye
- **O** Point to your open mouth
- **U** Point to any other player

Play continues with a different word for each player. All players start their score with the letter "A". Any player who says a vowel loses one point and proceeds to the next vowel. If a player has reached "U" and makes another mistake, they are out of the game. The last player left in the game wins.

**Twenty Questions**—Players take turns thinking of a spelling word. To help them guess the word, the other players take turns asking questions, such as "Does it begin with two consonants?" "Does it have the long o sound?" "Can I eat it?" A player can ask a question and guess in the same turn. To score a point, a player must spell the word correctly. If the guesser misspells the word, the next player may spell it correctly for a point.

**CVC Words**

**Message in a Bottle**—You will need 3 clear water bottles, plain and alphabet beads and uncooked rice or small pasta for this activity. Separate out the a, e, i, o and u beads. Put them in one bottle. Divide the consonant beads into 2 equal piles and put one pile in each of the remaining bottles. Divide the plain colored beads into 3 equal piles and put one pile in each bottle. Add rice or pasta to each bottle so that it is about 3/4 full. Put a lid on each bottle, marking the vowel bottle with a star on the lid. Give your child a piece of paper and have her line up the bottles so the star bottle is in the middle. Now, have her to pick up the first bottle, holding the bottom half, and shake it. Ask her to lift her thumb slightly and find the alphabet bead closest to her thumb. Write down the letter. Repeat with the star bottle and then the last bottle, writing down each letter in order. Does it make a real word?

**Finger Phonics**—Gather some old garden or plastic gloves (or pick some up at a dollar store). Cut off the fingers. Write a consonant on each finger with a blue marker and write vowels in red. (Make two of e, s, t, l.) Your child can insert letters on their fingers to make words.

**Space Mission**—With your child, make small cards with CVC words. Make a few “special” cards: pictures of aliens and comets. Make one card with a picture of the earth. Place all the cards in a can. Players take turns drawing a card and reading the word. If they get it right, they may keep it. If not, the card goes back in the can after being read correctly to the player. If a player gets an “alien” card, he can take a word card from another player (plus keep the “alien” card). If a player gets a “comet” card, he keeps the “comet” card and takes another turn. The game continues until someone gets an “Earth” card (end of the space mission). Then everyone counts his or her cards. The person with the most cards is the winner.
Building Words / Word Families

Many terms are used to describe the process of putting together letters and groups of letters to form words. Some of the terms you may find used are:

Onsets and Rimes — The onset is all the sounds in a word that come before the first vowel (the /bl/ in the word blank, the /sh/ in the word ship. The rime (also called phonogram) is the first vowel in a word and all the sounds that follow (e.g.; /ank/ in blank and /ip/ in ship). A group of words that share a rime are said to be a word family.

Consonant blends — two or more consecutive consonants which retain their individual sounds (e.g., /bl/ in block; /str/ in string).

Final blends — blends of two or three-letter consonants which make only one sound. These include -ng, -nk, -sh, -ch, and -tch.

Digraphs — pairings of letters that, together, make only one sound, such as sh, ch, th. A vowel digraph is two vowels together that make one sound such as ea in bread, ee in need, oo in book and ie in field.

Dipthong — a vowel sound produced by the tongue shifting position; a vowel that feels as if it has two parts - both vowels may be heard, but not quite making their usual sounds because of the blending. These include oi, oy, ow, and ou.

In the back of this booklet you will find word lists for each of these categories which can be used to prepare games.

You may also come across these terms:

Blending: The task of combining sounds rapidly.

Chunking: A decoding strategy for breaking words into manageable parts (e.g., /yes /ter/ day). Chunking can also refer to the process of dividing a sentence into smaller phrases where pauses might occur naturally.
Spelling, continued

**Bump!** — Write about 30 spelling words on small cards. On 5-7 more cards write “Bump!” Place all the cards in a bag and shake it to mix them up. Players take turns reaching into the bag and pulling out a card. The player reads the word to the other player(s) and the other player (or player to the right) spells the word. If correct, he keeps the card. If the word is spelled incorrectly, the reader spells the word correctly then puts the card back in the back and shakes it. The bag is passed to the next player who repeats the process. If a player has one or more cards and then pulls a Bump! card, all of her cards go back in the bag. Play for 5 minutes. When time is up, the player with the most cards wins. (If an adult is playing with a child, you can require the adult to spell the word then spell it backwards!)

**Spelling Hopscotch**—Draw a hopscotch board on a paved area outside, or use masking tape to create a hopscotch board indoors. Make the squares about 10”. Write a number in each box. Write spelling words on index cards. You will need a block or other object to throw. Play the game as you would regular hopscotch. Begin by having your child throw the block into the first box. She then hops on one foot into each of the boxes, skipping over the box with the block in it. On the way back, read a spelling card. She must spell the word before she can pick up the block. If the word is not spelled correctly the game starts again at 1. If successful, on the next turn your child throws a block into box 2 and repeats the process.

**Disappearing Words**—Have your child write spelling words on a chalkboard or dry erase board using thick letters, then ask him to erase the words by tracing over them again and again with a Q-tip until the words are erased.

**Rainbow Writing**—Have your child write a spelling word and then trace around it with several different colors of crayons.

Building Words / Word Families, continued

**Phonics Jump**—You will need five or six large pieces of cardboard along with a few index cards and tape. Start by writing B, C, F, H, M, P, R, S and D on index cards. You can add other consonants or blends as you child progresses. On each piece of cardboard write a word family ending (such as –at, -ig, -og, -an, -it) - again, you can add endings to vary the game. Tape the cardboard pieces to the floor, leaving a space between each. Give your child an index card and ask him to jump onto as many word matches as he can find. He earns a point for each match.

**Crazy Word Families**—This card game is played like Crazy Eights. On index cards, using four different color crayons, make four word family card sets, each with four words from one word family, and one word in each set in each color. For example: ball, call, fall, wall, cat, hat, rat, sat, cap, lap, map, rap and big, pig, dig and cot, not, rot, tot. Make 2 cards each that say WILD, SKIP A TURN and REVERSE. Deal out 7 cards to each player. Place the rest of the cards in a facedown pile. Flip over one card from the pile. Players try to match either the color or word family that has been flipped. If a card with cat written in red is turned over, players have to each lay down either a card with red writing or another card belonging to that word family. If a player can’t lay a card down she must keep taking cards from the stack until she can. The winner is the first player to run out of cards.

**How Many Words Can You Make?** You will need six paper plates and two small wooden cubes or dice on which the numbers have been taped over. If you don’t have dice you can use small pieces of paper, or make a die using the pattern in the back of the booklet. Write a word chunk on each paper plate (see the list). Write consonants on the cubes—h, d, b, f, l, m and gl, s, r, cl, t, p. Players take turns rolling the cube and putting the letter rolled in front of each word chunk on the paper plates. Write down all the “real” words and score a point for each.
Building Words / Word Families, continued

Go Dish, Swish, Fish—Make a Go Fish game using word families. Using 36 index cards, write one word on each card, making sure that there are two cards for each word family (or 4 of each word family for a more challenging game). Deal seven cards to each player. Place the remaining cards face down in the middle. Players take turns asking another player for rhyming words (“Do you have a card that rhymes with ___?) If the player asked has a card (or cards), he gives it to the other player, who then places the matching cards faceup on the table and reads them. Another player with a card that matches this word family may add it to the set. If the player does not have the card in question he says “Go Dish, Swish, Fish.” and the player takes the top card from the deck. The first player to get rid of all his cards is the winner.

Word Battle—This two player game is based on the game Battleship. On a piece of paper, each player makes a grid with initial sounds written across the top, and word endings written down the left side of the grid. Players then choose 3 or 4 combinations which form real words to be their “ships” and secretly write them down, along with the grid coordinates. Players take turns naming two coordinates and saying the word formed by the initial sound and word ending (it may not be a real word). If it is a real word they write the word formed in the square. If it is one of the other player’s “ships”, the player says so and the word is circled. If it is not a real word an X is made in the square. The first player to find all the other player’s “ships” wins the game.

Presto Change-O—Write a five letter word at the top of a piece of paper. Players take turns replacing one letter in the word with a different letter to form a new word. Words can’t be repeated. Pass the paper between players until a player can’t make a new word. The last player to make a new word gets to pick the next word. Variation: Use a 3 letter word. Toss a coin before each turn—heads the player must change a consonant, tails she must change a vowel.

Spelling, continued

Spelling Coverup—Cut a bookmark size strip from colored paper. Print one of your child’s spelling words in large letters on another piece of paper, and cover the word with the strip. Reveal the word to your child one letter at a time. After each letter she tries to guess the word and spell it. When she gets it right, the number of letters showing is her score for the round. After using all the words, add up the scores for a grand total. Play again, trying to get a lower score.

Find a Word—Turn your child’s spelling list into a fun game by writing 5 or 6 of them in rows on graph paper (or draw a grid), one letter per box and one word per line. Then, ask him how many new words he can form with the letters. The letters must touch horizontally, vertically or diagonally. In the grid show he might find flap, bed and meat, beet, fate, late, the, team, help, and more “hidden words.”.

Spelling Beans—Write spelling words on lima beans, one letter per bean. Toss the beans and have your child try to spell all the words.

Connect the Dots—Make a grid of rows and columns of dots. Players take turns asking each other to spell a word on a spelling word list. If correct, he can connect two dots on the game board. When a player forms a square, he can write his initials in the box. The player with most squares at the end wins.

Flip Out—Write spelling words on index cards, one word per card. Lay the cards faceup in an array. Players should study the cards for one minute, then turn them face down in the same positions. Take turns pointing to a card and spelling the word you think is on the card. If you guess the right word and spell it correctly, keep the card. If it is spelled incorrectly, or if the wrong word is guessed, read and spell the word on the card turn the card back over. See who has the most cards at the end of the game.
Practicing spelling words can be fun with these quick, easy activities.

**Spelling Basketball**—You will need a small ball and a clean trash can. Place the can several feet away from players. Player 1 reads a word to player 2, who must spell it. If he spells it correctly he is allowed to try to shoot the ball into the can to earn a point. Variation: Use tape to put down three different lines and allow the player to choose which line to take his shot from—the farther line is worth 3 points, the middle line 2 points and the closer line 1 point. Or, roll a die on each turn to determine the number of points the basket will be worth—odd numbers are one point, even numbers two.

**Glitter Words**—Write troublesome spelling words in large letters, using glue. Sprinkle glitter onto the word, using a writing motion (in the order the lines and curves are normally written). Post your glittery creation.

**Spelling Baseball**—Draw four bases on a piece of paper, or lay pillows on the floor to be bases. The pitcher selects a word. If the batter can spell the word correctly, she moves forward one base. If the player misses a word it is the other player’s turn. A point is earned every time you pass home plate.

**Scrabble Spelling**—Use Scrabble tiles* to spell out the words on a spelling list. Which word has the highest point value?

**Scrabble Baseball**—You will need Scrabble tiles* for this activity, along with a list of spelling words. Place the tiles facedown between players. Players take turns drawing a tile. When player can form a spelling word, they earn a run. The player with the most runs wins. Variation: Calculate the point value of words for each player’s score.

* See the sight word section for directions on making your own Scrabble tiles.

**Put It Together**—Cut out letters from newspapers or magazines to spell the words on a spelling list.

**Spelling Puzzle**—Cut apart spelling words and put them back together like a puzzle.

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**Building Words / Word Families, continued**

Toss and Blend—You will need 5 (or more) paper cups for this activity, and a game chips. Write a two or three letter blend on the inside upper lip of each cup (see the blends list in the back of the booklet). Tape the cups to the floor so they are near each other and the blends are visible. You can make a portable game by taping the cups inside a box lid. Take turns tossing a chip into any cup. If the chip lands in a cup the player must come up with a word that starts with the blend to earn a point. If the chip does not land in a cup or if the player cannot generate a word, no point is earned. Variation: Play with ending blends (sh, ch, th, etc.)

Blend Toss—You will need a bean bag (or baggie filled with packing peanuts or pasta and taped shut) to play this game. Write nine blends on separate pieces of paper. Tape the papers to the floor in a 3X3 grid. The goal of the game is to hit the sound you hear. Say a sound on one of the pieces of paper. Your child gets three chances to land a beanbag on the correct sound. If she gets it on the first try she gets 3 points, 2 points if it lands correctly on the second try, and 1 point for the final throw. Take turns being the reader and thrower.

Ghost—To play this rhyming game the first player says a word. Other players take turns saying rhyming words until one player cannot think of another word that rhymes. That player gets a G as a penalty. The game continues with a different player saying a word at the beginning of each round. When players accumulate the letters in the word GHOST they are out of the game.

Letter Blend Hopscotch—On a paved area draw a hopscotch pattern with 12 or 16 squares. The letters in the two single squares should be repeated in the double squares that follow. Play as regular hopscotch, but when your child lands on a single letter have her say the sound of the letter. When she lands on the two squares she must say the blend.
Building Words / Word Families, continued

Eggs-ellent Words—Use leftover plastic eggs (usually half price or less the week after Easter) to make this game. On each egg, write word endings on one half and beginning letters or blends on the other, so that when the egg is together it spells a word. Mix up the egg halves so color cannot be used as a clue! Take apart the eggs and ask your child to put them together again. Variation: On the right side of the egg write a word family ending (-ing, -og, etc.). On the left hand side of the egg write 3 or 4 letters or blends which combine with the rime to make words. Take the eggs apart and mix them up. Ask your child to match up the eggs so that each one forms only “real” words.

Word Target Game—You will need two box lids, pizza boxes or the short boxes soda cans come in for this game. Cut off one short side on each lid. Divide each into a 20 square grid. In the first lid write one of these letters in each box: b, c, d, f, g, h, j, k, x, r, s, t, l, m, n, p, v, w, y, z, in any order. Divide the second lid into an eight (or more) section grid and write a word ending in each box, for example, ab, ad, ag, an, ap, st, ay. Players take turns using two game chips and flicking one into each box. If the player can make a real word using the word chunks the chips land on, he gets a point. Variation: Use beginning word blends.

Flip A Rhyme—You will need a small wirebound notebook, or staple pieces of paper together at the top. Cut the pages into three equal sections, as shown. Make a list of word family trios (3 words that rhyme). Starting with the left section, write one word from each trio on each page. Repeat the same process with the middle section and the second word of each trio, but go down the list in a different order. Repeat with the third section and third word of the trios, again using a different order for the words. Have your child flip the pages until all three words rhyme. Vocabulary, continued

Letter Taboo—Choose a common consonant (not q, x or z). During this activity no one can say a word beginning with that letter— they must use another word. For example, if the taboo letter is c, instead of car a player could use vehicle, or sweets instead of candy.

Word Charades—Each player uses a dictionary and writes down 10 words and their definitions on slips of paper. Fold the slips and put them in a bowl. Take turns drawing a slip and acting out the word while the other players try to guess what it is.

Beat the Mouse—In this game players try to guess a mystery word before a mouse is drawn completely. The first player thinks of a word and draws the amount of letters on a piece of paper ( _ _ _ _ _ _ ). Other players take turns guessing a letter that is in the word. If it is correct the first player writes the letter in its place. If it is wrong he writes it separately and draws a part of the mouse (body, tail, ears, head, legs, whiskers, eyes) If the player guesses the word before the mouse is completed, he scores one point.

Study and Slap—You will need two fly swatters (or players can use their hands) and post-it notes. Make a list of vocabulary words with definitions. Write the words on post-it notes and stick them on a wall or table. Give each player a flyswatter. A non-player should read the meaning for one of the words out loud. The first player to slap the correct answer earns a point. The player with the most points wins.

Word Stretch—Write two words on a piece of paper and separate them by three blanks. Then fill in the blanks so that each word has some relationship with the word before and the word after. For example, if you began with “movie,” left three blanks, and closed with “desk,” you might end up with the sequence, “movie, ticket, paper, write, desk.” It takes imagination and some ingenuity, but there are just about no first and last words that can’t be united. Make a game out of it by creating challenges for each other and competing to be the first to finish.
Vocabulary, continued

Vocabulary Stretch—Name a place or topic (bank). Take turns saying words associated with that word (money, deposit, dollar, savings, locks, coins, teller, loan, interest, check). The last person to think of a word chooses the next category.

Letter Leader—One player suggests three letters which are found at the beginning of many words—bat, car, dot, ent, gro, hol, kni, mod, etc. Each player writes down the letters and has 5 minutes to think of as many words as possible beginning with those three letters (Example with “com”: comedy, come, compare, comic, compass, communicate, common). Players score a point for each word no other player wrote down. You can set a minimum letter requirement for words generated by more skilled players.

Variation: Use 2 letter combination (st: stop, step, store, still, stay, etc.)

Race for Spelling Patterns—On small cards or pieces of paper, write common phonograms, one per card: -ack, -eat, -ice, -ock, -uck, -an, -ell, -ick, -ug, -ap, -est, -ide, -op, -ash, -ill, -or, -unk, -at, -in, -ore, -ale, -ain, -ing, -ail, -ink, -ip, -ale, -ir, -ame, -ay, ank. Give each player paper and pencil. Hold up the first card. Each player has one minute to write down as many words as she can think of that end in that phonogram. Compare lists. Players should cross off all words that are on another player’s list. The player with the most original words wins the round.

Vocabulary Go Fish—Write vocabulary words and their definitions on separate cards. Shuffle all the cards and deal six cards to each player. Scatter the rest of the cards face down between players. Players must try to find a match for one of their cards by reading his opponent the word or definition on his card. The opponent has to give the other player the card containing the word or definition that pairs with his card if he has it. If he doesn’t, he tells the other player to “Go fish” and the player takes a card from the center. If the player finds a match, he can set his pair down. Continue until all the cards have been paired. The student who has the most pairs wins the game.

Building Words / Word Families, continued

Consonant Blend Scavenger Hunt—Write blends on index cards, one blend per card—bl, br, cl, cr, dr, fl, gr, pl, sc, sl, sm, sn, sp, st, sw and tr. Give your child a piece of paper and a pencil. Ask him to find as many items as he can in 5 minutes which start with the sound on the card. For example: cl—clothes, cloth, clip, cleaner; dr—drawer, drink, drain.

Digraph Lotto—Have your child look for pictures of items (or draw pictures) which begin or end with digraphs -shaker, fish, brush, shell, shoe, sheets, dish, shovel, chocolate chips, cherries, watch, chain, thumb, thimble, three, bath, mouth, teeth, cheese, chair, couch, etc. Arrange them on 2 or 3 3X3 grids. Cut index cards into fourths and write a digraph to match each picture. Mix up the cards and stack them in a pile. Put some beans or pieces of pasta in a bowl. To play, a player picks up the top card and reads the digraph. If he has a picture matching a digraph (there may be more than one to choose from) he puts a bean on that spot. If no match is found the card is put back at the bottom of the pile. Play continues until one of the players completely covers his playing board.

Twist a Word—Make a twister game on an old plastic table cloth or shower curtain. Draw 16 circles, large enough to fit a hand or leg, but not so far apart that a child can’t reach them with his hands and legs spread out. Write a consonant or blend in each circle. On small cards, write two or more words for each letter or blend—one word per card. On another color paper make 9 more cards—2 each right hand, left hand, right leg, left leg, and one Player’s Choice. Put all the cards in a bag. Pull one card of each color at a time and read the word. Your child must put (or move) that body part to the circle with the matching beginning sound. If player’s choice is pulled, the player may move either arm or leg. How long can he keep from falling over?

Variation: This could also be played with vowel sounds or ending sounds.
Building Words / Word Families, continued

Roll It! - You will need a toilet paper tube for each word roll you want to make. On the right side of the tube write the endings of 3 word families (such as an, in and en). Write 3 different consonants on a paper strip (try t, p and f). Staple or tape the ends of the paper strip to make a ring that slips over the end of the tube. Place the paper ring on the left side of the tube. Ask your child to select one word ending. Then ask her to turn the paper ring to form new words. (Not every combination will make an actual word.) Then have her roll the tube to form new words. To make this into a game, you’ll need at least one word roll per player. Place the tubes and rings in a large paper bag. Ask each player to randomly choose one of each. Each player slips the paper ring on his roll and tries to write down as many words as possible. The player with the most correct words wins the round. Here are some more combinations from which you can spell several words:

at, it, ut + b, c, p  ap, ip, op + l, m, t  ig, ill, ish + d, f, w
dall, and, old + b, c, h  eed, ing, ock + d, r, s

Variations:
- Add consonant blends at the beginning of the words.
- Use a paper towel roll. Add word endings and beginnings!

Rhymin' Simon—In this variation of Simon Says, the leader instructs players to clap, jump or take another action if two words rhyme ("Simon says clap if the words rhyme") then says pairs of rhyming words, occasionally saying a non-rhyming pair (such as snake/cake, tree/see, cup/star, red/bed). The older the child, the faster you can go.

Scrambled Beans – You will need uncooked white beans for this activity. Write vowels on one side of the beans, one letter per bean. In another color marker, write consonants on the other side of the beans, one letter per bean. Divide the beans among players and toss each pile. Which player can make the most words? The most C-V-C words? The longest word? Just add more beans for a more challenging game.

Antonym-Synonym Tic Tac Toe—Synonyms are words with similar meanings. Antonyms are words with opposite meanings. Choose a word with many shades of meaning, such as good, nice, big, bad or happy. Write the selected word on a piece of paper and draw a tic tac toe board beneath it. Player X says a synonym for the word. If correct, he puts an X in a pace of his choice. Then, Player O says an antonym for the selected word and if correct, puts an O in the space of her choice. Play continues until one player gets 3 in a row. You can have one player say antonyms and one player synonyms or flip a coin to determine the word category on each turn.

Variation: Play with a 4X4 or 5X5 board, trying to get three in a row.

Alpha-Bit-at-a-Time—This two player game that stretches vocabulary and provides spelling practice. Write the alphabet down a page of paper - each letter on a different line. Player 1 is the circle player. Player 2 is the cross out player. Player 1 takes the paper and writes a word that contains the letter a (apple). If it is spelled correctly, player 1 draws a circle around the letter a. If it is spelled wrong, player 2 writes it correctly and crosses out the a. Player 2 then writes a word that contains the letter b (bottle). If it is spelled correctly, player 2 crosses off the b. If incorrect, player 1 has the chance to steal the word and letter. However, players do not have to use just one letter at a time. For his next move player 1 might write the word credit, and be able to circle the c, d and e. Multiple letters must follow the sequence of the alphabet, though they may be out of sequence in the word. When all the letters have been used, the player with the most letters circled or crossed out is the winner.

Vocabulary Bingo—Create a list of 25 words. Each player draws a 5X5 square bingo grid and writes one of the words in each of the 25 spaces. Another player call out definitions. Players must find the word with that definition on their card in order to cross it out. Five in a row wins the game.

Variation: Create a list with more than 25 words. Players pick any 25 to put on their card.
Predict-ionary —You will need a children’s dictionary for this activity. With the dictionary closed, a player asks a question about the future (What kind of day will I have?; What gift will I get for my birthday?). Then, without looking, she opens the dictionary and points to a word. She must use the word and its definition nearest her finger to make up an answer to the question. For instance, if she points to elephant she could say “Something huge will happen today.” If she points to detective she could say “I will figure something out today.”

Melting Snowman— This is a variation of Hangman. In pencil, draw a snowman with 10 –16 parts (two or three circles for the body, arms, buttons, eyes, nose, mouth, etc.) Write a word with at least 5 letters on another piece of paper. Underneath the snowman, make a space for each letter in the word (___ ___ ___ ___ ____). Explain that your child will have to guess the word only knowing the number of letters in it. She will start by guessing one letter at a time. If the letter is in the word, write it in the correct space or spaces. If the letter is incorrect write it below the line and erase one part of the snowman. Your child has to try and keep the snowman from “melting” entirely before the word is guessed.

Variations:
Phrase Melting Snowman—Instead of a single word or name choose a phrase (hot and humid, I spy with my little eye).
Sentence Melting Snowman—Instead of a single word or name choose a sentence. Silly sentences make it more fun.

What a Difference a Word Makes—Pick a favorite story and photocopy it.* On the photocopy, replace key words with similar but different words. If you picked a story about three bears, you could replace three with fifteen, bears with rabbits, and porridge with celery. Change the words everywhere they occur in the story. Read it and laugh. Your child could also illustrate your new story.

* or you could use small sticky notes to cover the original words.

Word Builder—You will need two 4”X6” index cards and some 3”X5” index cards to make your word builder. Fold and tape the two large index cards as shown. Cut the small index cards into four pieces and print a lower case letter at the top of each. Set out the tray and help your child build a word. Change one letter to make a new word. Repeat, making as many new words as you can think of. Variation: Allow the addition or removal of another card (end becomes send, then send turns into sand, remove the s to make and, etc.)

Colorful Words—To make this game, you need paint sample color cards. There are two kinds of paint cards. The first type of paint card is long and narrow, like a bookmark, with many colors. The second is more of a square shape, with only a few, or just one, color. On the long narrow cards, write beginning letters or blends, one on each color chip. Cut the square cards into separate colors or, if one color, into a horizontal strip. In these cards, cut out a square large enough to reveal the letters on the word beginnings cards. Your child can combine the cards to see how many words she can form. To make this into a game, make 2 face down piles—word endings and word beginnings. Players take turns taking one of each until they are all taken. Each player turns the cards over and writes down as many “real” words as they can form. The player with the most words wins.
Reading Fluency

Reading fluency is the ability to read words accurately and rapidly. When fluent readers read aloud, they do so almost effortlessly and with expression. Even when fluent readers read silently, they recognize words automatically and do not spend undue amounts of time trying to decode words. This ability is an important component of reading comprehension (understanding what is read). Children who are not fluent readers read hesitantly and with great effort, struggling to sound out each word. These children spend too much mental energy identifying words, leaving little energy to focus on comprehension: when they reach the end of their reading selection, they have no idea what they have been reading about.

One Minute Dash—Explain to your child that you are going to have a reading race. Ask her to begin reading a passage when you say “go!” Time her for one minute. Let your child count the number of words she read. Chances are she will want to race again to see if she can beat her previous score.

Oh No! Card Game—On small cards, write short phrases such as
- What did he say?
- He called me
- out of the water
- to the store

You can use phrases from books your child is reading. Also make a few cards that say “Oh No!” Put the cards in a bag and take turns pulling one out and reading it aloud. If they are read correctly, the player keeps the cards. When an “Oh No!” card is pulled out the player must put 3 cards back in the container. If a player who has less than 3 cards draws an “oh, No!” card he puts back all his cards. The player with the most cards at the end of the game is the winner.

Oh, No Board Game—In this variation work with your child to draw a game board. Players take turns pulling a card and reading it. If the card is read correctly, the player gets to move ahead a number of spaces equal to the number of words in the phrase. When a player draws an Oh No! card he/she must go back 2 spaces.

Vocabulary, continued

Prefix/Suffix—Learning prefixes and suffixes quickly boosts vocabulary. On index cards, write prefixes (for example, pre-, un-, dis-, re-, mis-, im, bi-, de-) and/or suffixes (for example, -er, -able, -ous, -ness, -ful, -ly or -y, -ment), one per card. Shuffle the cards and turn them face down in a pile. Players take turns flipping over the top card. The first person who can shout out a word that exemplifies the prefix or suffix and can define the word, gets to keep that card. If you play more rounds with the same cards, the words must not have been used in a previous round.

Variation: Adults must name 2 words to claim the card.

Unending Adjectives—This activity will stretch your vocabulary and memory! Ask your child to point out an object. Take turns coming up with adjectives—words that describe that object. See how many you can string together (and remember!) Example: A ball could be described as a big ball, a big round ball, a big round red ball, a big round red bouncing ball, a big round red bouncing beach ball.

Categories for All—Choose a category for your child (things you can eat, animals, things larger than a car). Give her 30 seconds to name as many words as she can that fit the category. Count the words as she says them. Then have her choose a category for you and count your words. Who came up with more? Hint: With young children you might want to give your child a minute and yourself 30 seconds.

Word Stumpers—You will need a dictionary for this activity. One player selects an unusual word from the dictionary. She then chooses to either read the real definition from the dictionary or make up a new one. The other person must guess if the definition is real or fake. The player should try to make the made-up definitions sound like a real dictionary definition. He/she can also put the dictionary definition in his own words to avoid guesses made from the structure of the sentence. If another player guesses correctly, he scores a point. If the guess is wrong, the reader scores. Trade roles an play again until one person scores 5 points.
**Vocabulary, continued**

**Beginnings, Endings and Middles** — Write each letter of the alphabet, except q, x and z, on a slip of paper and mix them together in a bag. Take turns choosing a slip and naming a word that begins with the letter, a word that ends with it, and a word with the letter in the middle. For example, for “i” you might come up with two, cat and little. Score a point for each word. If all three words cannot be named by a player the letter goes back in the bag. Play until all the letters have been drawn. The player with the most points wins.

“Instead of” - Start by writing one overused word at the top of a sheet of paper, such as good, bad, nice, said, fun, very, etc. Work together with your child to come up with synonyms (word with the same meaning) that are more descriptive, vivid and expressive. For instance, instead of “very” you could include wonderfully, extremely, certainly, remarkably, truly, etc. Post the list and ask family members to add to it. Try to use the “instead of” words at least once a day.

**Find Five**—Each day, have your child try to find words in print or speech that match a certain category—color words, science words, words that tell how people move, etc.

**Vocabulary Dominoes**—Make synonym dominoes. Write a word on each domino half. Write two synonyms for that word on one side of two other dominoes. Make as many dominoes as you wish.

**Vocabulary Toss**—Toss a ball to your child while saying a category. As soon as your child catches the ball, he must reply with a word that falls into the category. Toss the ball back and forth using the same category until one player cannot come up with another word.

**Word Search**—Give your child a magazine and ask him to find as many words as possible that fit a certain topic—toys, food, etc.

**Word of the Day**—Have family members take turns looking up a new word and posting it on the refrigerator. Try to use the word as much as possible during the day.

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**Reading Fluency, continued**

**Phrase Progression**—Start the activity by writing down the beginning of a sentence, such as “My aunt Sue”. Ask your child to read it. Have your child dictate another phrase to add to the sentence such as “who is a police officer,” and ask him to read the combined phrases. Add two more phrases, asking your child to read the sentence after each addition. For longer passages, try Accordion Reading:

**Accordion Reading**—Place a piece of paper so the shorter sides are at the top and bottom. Fold the top to the bottom, creasing the fold. Now fold the top piece of the paper to the creased edge. Turn the paper over and repeat with the other side. Next fold the top edge down to the crease. Turn over and repeat with the other side. Continue this process as long as the size of your paper allow. Sharply crease the folds before opening up. You now have an accordion paper on which to write a poem or story. On each section write a line of a poem or a phrase of your story. Your child can now read what you have written, line by line, by unfolding the paper.

**Word Family Progression**—A progression activity can also be done with word families. Start with a word that has a large word family such as one ending in -ay, -ip, -at, -am, -ag, -ell, -ot, -ing, -ap or -ug. Ask your child to read the word. Have your child write down another word in the same family, then read both words. Repeat until she can read an entire chain of words with speed and accuracy.

**LEGO Fluency Game**—Make fluency cards as described in the Oh No! game, but instead of Oh, No! cards, make cards which say “Add 3 (or 4, or 2) Legos” and “Take a Lego.” You will also need Lego blocks. Place the Legos between players and stack the cards face down. Players take turns turning over a card and reading the phrase. If it is read correctly, they get to add a Lego to their creation. If a player turns over an Add Legos card, they may take that number of Legos and can then take another turn. If a player turns over a Take a Lego card, they may take one Lego from any other player. When all the cards have been read, the player whose creation contains the most Legos is the winner.
Tongue Twisters—Tongue twisters are not only entertaining, but they also develop verbal skills in children. A tongue twister is a sentence, phrase or group of words that is difficult to say quickly or clearly. For children struggling with particular sound combinations, tongue twisters can be a fun way to practice troublesome sounds. Here are some to get you started—books of longer tongue twisters can be found at the library.

- Sam saw six seagulls.
- Bumblebees buzzed Belinda.
- Which witch was which?
- Ten tired turtles Tango-ed.
- Spring flowers have sprung.
- Cops catch crafty criminals.
- Sue swims slowly on Sundays.
- Lyn loves limes and lemons.
- Penny paid a penny for a pumpkin.
- Music makes Mel move.
- Smelly shoes and socks shock sisters.
- Dick kicks sticky bricks.

Try making your own tongue twisters following these simple steps:

- Choose a Name: The best letters are B D L M P S or T. Use your child’s name or that of a friend. Or choose the name of a character in a book you are reading and answer the questions based on his characteristics.
  - What did the person do? It must begin with the name letter.
  - Where is the person?; must begin with the letter of her name.
  - When did this activity occur?; must begin with the name letter.
  - Why did this activity happen?; must begin with the name letter.

Barry
Baked bread
Belinda’s Bakery
Before bedtime
Brother made him
Barry baked bread at Belinda’s Bakery before bedtime because brother made him.

Guess My Word—Take turns describing a mystery word: “I heard a word the other day. It means _______. It’s the opposite of [or other clues like It rhymes with, it starts with the _____ sound, etc.]"

Souped Up Words—Take a tablespoon of dried alphabet pasta and spread it out on a piece of black construction paper. Set a timer for 3 minutes and see how many words your child can make.

Address Book—To help your child remember new vocabulary words, use an inexpensive address book. Each time your child comes upon an unfamiliar word, have her write it in the address book under the appropriate heading. Look up the word in a dictionary and write a short definition beside the word.

My Word—Choose a word for your child to guess (balloon). Tell her how many letters are in it. Then, give three more clues (My word has two sets of double letters. My word has two syllables. It rhymes with noon.) Give more clues if necessary until she guesses.

Up and Down—Think of a five letter word. Each player writes the word with its letters going down the page and beside this with the letters going up the page;

N________H
O________T
R________R
T________O
H________N

Players then try to be the first to write down five words (names can be used) that begin and end as shown.

A to Z—The object of this game is to be the first player to write an alphabetical word list (omit q, x and z). The first time through the list, every word should be one syllable long. The second time, use only two-syllable words. In the third round the words must be 3 syllables. You can also make up variations such as only using food words.