

**Module: Communication and Emergent Literacy:  
Early Intervention Issues**

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**Session 5: Interventions to Facilitate Emergent  
Literacy**

**Handout N: Phonological Awareness**

Murphy, J.L. (2005). *Phonological awareness*. Chapel Hill, NC: Early Intervention Training Center for Infants and Toddlers With Visual Impairments, FPG Child Development Institute, UNC-CH.

The ability to understand and respond to the sounds and rhythms of language is associated with reading fluency (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). The following developmentally appropriate activities are fun and help young children build sound awareness for literacy.

- Emphasize rhyme and alliteration (see definitions below) during shared storybook reading. Provide opportunities for toddlers to repeat rhyming words. Select books that involve rhyming patterns, such as
  - Brown, M.W., & Hurd, C. (1947). *Goodnight moon*. New York: HarperCollins
  - Degan, B. (1983). *Jamberry*. New York: HarperCollins
  - Fleming, D. (1991). *In the small, small pond*. New York: Henry Holt
  - Kirk, D. (1999). *Little miss spider*. New York: Scholastic
  - Martin, B., & Radunsky, V. (1994). *The maestro plays*. New York: Henry Holt
- Engage in word play involving alliteration (e.g., “Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers”) and rhyme (“The cat wore a hat as he sat on the mat with his friend the gnat”).
- Recite or sing Mother Goose rhymes, such as “Jack Sprat” and “This Little Piggy,” and other rhymes that have been passed down through generations. Rhymes that include movement and gestures, such as “Pat-a-Cake” and “The Wheels on the Bus,” are even more captivating to young children.
- Read poetry with vivid rhymes.
- Sing songs that play with language, such as “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” and “Bingo.” Some toddlers enjoy listening to Raffi’s song “Eat, Eat, Eat Apples and Bananas.” This song repeats the same four words over and over, but changes the vowel sounds (“It, it, it ipples and bininis”).

- Play with syllables of words by setting nursery rhymes to music, using different notes for each syllable. Caregivers can model breaking down words by singing the rhymes slowly, singing them fast, and clapping out the syllables. Tapping with percussion instruments, such as sand blocks, cymbals, and drums, while singing can also help young children become aware of syllables.

## Definitions

**Alliteration** Repetition of the same letter or sound, especially consonants, in the stressed or initial syllables of two or more neighboring words (as with *h* in *hat* and *hold*)

**Phonological awareness** Ability to detect and manipulate the sound structures of oral language.

**Rhyme** Correspondence in sounds, especially ending sounds, of words or lines of verse (as with *at* in *cat*, *flat*, and *hat*).

## References

- Brown, M.W., & Hurd, C. (1947). *Goodnight moon*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Degan, B. (1983). *Jamberry*. New York: HarperCollins.
- Fleming, D. (1991). *In the small, small pond*. New York: Henry Holt.
- Kirk, D. (1999). *Little miss spider*. New York: Scholastic.
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- Pullen, P.C., & Justice, L. (2003). Enhancing phonological awareness, print awareness, and oral language skills in preschool children. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 39 (2), 87-98.
- Rosenkoetter, S., & Barton, L.R. (2002). Bridges to literacy: Early routines that promote later school success. *Zero to Three*, 22(4), 33-38.
- Snow, C.E., Burns, M.S., & Driffin, P. (Eds.) (1998). *Preventing reading difficulties in young children*. Washington, DC: National Academy Press.