



Learning together!

Here are some ideas for games and activities parents and children can do at home or in the car. Each one will help to improve literacy skills.

Hunt the rhyme

Start by choosing an object from around the house that is spelled with one of the spelling patterns your child has been learning at school. Ask your child to name it and find three things or actions that rhyme with it.

eg you choose a model boat to demonstrate 'oa'. Your child finds a coat, a bar of soap and points at their own throat.

NB. In this example the rhyme is the middle sound.

You can adapt this game for a car journey by naming an item and asking for words which share the same rhyme in the specified part of the word.

Circle game

This is one for the whole family as it helps to develop an understanding of rhyme in younger children too. Everyone stands in a circle and someone starts by saying a word with a common rhyme like bell. They then throw a ball or a bean bag to the next person who must say a word that rhymes with bell (shell, spell, smell, tell) and so on. When the ball has been right around the circle, you can start again with another word. The game can be adapted for two players with the ball thrown back and forth. First player to run out of rhymes for the stated word loses a 'life'.

I Spy with semantic clues

The wording is changed to, for example, 'I spy something you can wear which rhymes with shoot.' The player who guesses 'boot' has the next turn.

Poetry

This is a great activity as it uses both the auditory and the visual channels – you can hear the rhyme and, when the poem is written down, you can see the rhyme.

Reading poetry

There are some great collections of humorous poems available in libraries. They can be used to liven up a car journey (read by a parent) and provide inspiration for children to write their own. Or there are themed books – nature, animals, football – for children with specific interests.

Writing poetry

By choosing a particular spelling pattern a child can try writing their own poems or rhymes.

eg using **oa**:

I like to be out on the river

I like to be out in my **boat**

Oh no! I'm wet all over

You didn't tell me the boat doesn't **float**

It does not matter if your child wants to write difficult words they cannot yet spell; in fact it is great if they are able to stop their difficulties from inhibiting them. You can offer the correct spelling in the following way:

eg for dragonfly

'What sound can you hear at the beginning of the word?' – dr

'and what comes next?' – ag, then on

Feel free to supply as much of the word as you feel your child needs, while demonstrating that even quite difficult words can be broken down into smaller, more manageable ones.