



Active Literacy Games for Early Readers

Got an energetic kiddo? Literacy games don't have to be quiet and calm. Below is a list of active games that will engage your child while helping strengthen their emergent literacy skills. Check out the example words at the end of this document to help you select words for each activity.

Sound Toss

Materials: ball, beanbag or object to toss

Directions: This is an oral game to practice separating words into individual sounds (phonemes). Say a word aloud (eg. "chop") and have your child repeat it back. Take turns saying one sound at a time and tossing the ball back and forth. For example, player 1 says "ch" and then tosses the ball to player 2, who says "o" and then tosses it back to player 1, who says "p."

Sound Bounce

Materials: bouncy ball

Directions: Similar to the above. Have your child say one sound at a time while bouncing the ball once for each sound. For example, "ch" - bounce - "o" - bounce - "p" - bounce.

Word Jump

Materials: index cards or post-its with words written on them.

Directions: Spread the word cards out on the floor. Call out a word and have your child find the corresponding card, read it aloud and then jump on it. Try different kinds of jumps - two legs, one legged stomps, frog jumps etc. Make this more challenging by selecting similar words (eg. ship / shop) so that your child has to pay close attention to each letter and sound.

Word Smash:

Materials: Clean(!) fly swatter, index cards or post-its with words written on them.

Directions: Similar to Word Jump. Instead of jumping on the word, have your child swat it with the flyswatter. If you have two players, they can compete to be the first one to swat it.

Lilypad Race

Materials: index cards or post-its with words on them.

Directions: Put the word cards in a line across a carpet or floor area that represents a "pond." Have your child read one card (representing the "lilypad"), then frog jump on top of it. Repeat

until your child reaches the other side of the “pond.” Time your child and have her try to beat her time in following rounds. Mix the order of the cards in each round.

Word Charades:

Materials: cards with word or short sentences, bag/hat/box to pick cards out of. Example cards: “duck” “mad” or “The dog is fast”

Directions: The first player picks a card out of the bag. He should read it to himself silently and then act out the word or the sentence. The other players try to guess the prompt.

Bonus Basket Game

Materials: basket or bin, ball, word cards

Directions: Place a stack of word cards between two players. The first player draws a card. If she reads it correctly, her team gets a point. Then the player will try to throw the ball in the basket/bin. If the ball goes in, she scores an extra point for his team.

Scavenger Hunt

Materials: small objects, a list of the objects , a pencil or pen.

Directions: Place small objects around the room. Give your child a word list to read and a small basket or bag to collect the things on their list. See if she can find all the objects and check off the entire list.

Word Spritz:

Materials: Small spray bottle filled with water, chalk

Directions: Write words with chalk on a sidewalk or driveway. Call out one of the words. Have your child find it and spritz it away with water.

Word soccer:

Materials: small cones, word / sentence cards, ball, tape

Directions: Tape a card with a word or short sentence on it to a small cone. Place the cones in a line a short distance away from a starting point. Have your child dribble to a cone, read the word or sentence aloud, and then continue dribbling around the cone and return to the starting point. If you have two players, you can make it a race.

Word bowling:

Materials: small cones, word / sentence cards, ball, tape

Directions: Similar to Word Soccer, above. Instead of dribbling the ball to the cones, roll the ball at the cone and try to knock it down. Each cone knocked down earns the player one point.

Hop Scotch:

Materials: chalk

Directions: Draw a hopscotch frame on a sidewalk or driveway. Fill in the boxes with letters. Be sure to include common consonants and a few vowels. Call out a word and have your child jump from box to box to spell the word. For example, for the word stop, have your child jump to s - then t - then o - then p.

Example Words

C-V-C

bug	hat	pig	hen	log
cup	mad	sip	red	top
run	lap	win	pet	hot

Short vowel words with digraphs

chin	this	cluck	shop	wham
chop	thud	snack	trash	what
chest	cloth	brick	wish	

Short vowel words with consonant blends

trap	fresh	brush	crust	slip
twig	split	stem	crib	slog
shrub	flip	black	clock	grip

C-V-C-e Words

chase	ride	bone	cute	theme
plate	wipe	code	tube	Steve
shake	bike	vote	tune	

Two closed syllable words

napkin	mitten	basket	solid	invent
trumpet	publish	kitten	problem	himself
absent	upset	cabin	cobweb	cactus

High Frequency Irregular Words

they	said	put	my	new
she	you	their	one	some
was	have	your	does	very