**Early Literacy: Phonics**

I encourage my child to engage in activities linked to recognising letters and sounds, such as using letter flashcards, listening for sounds on walk and playing games like I spy and matching sounds to pictures.

Matching sounds games

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com/uk/game/match-sounds?phase=1> which animal is making that sound?

<https://www.phonicsbloom.com/uk/game/whats-behind-the-door?phase=1> what animal is behind the door?

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/resources/phase/1/welcome-to-the-zoo> guess the animal in the box

<https://www.phonicsplay.co.uk/resources/phase/1/sound-starters> mystery sound buttons

You could also have a go at these listening games:

<https://video.link/w/sZmAb>

<https://video.link/w/ENmAb>

<https://video.link/w/BSmAb>

<https://video.link/w/4TmAb>

<https://video.link/w/ZUmAb>

<https://video.link/w/XsrCb>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/teach/school-radio/nursery-rhymes-songs-index/zhwdgwx> a collection of Nursery rhymes

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/tiny-happy-people/nursery-rhymes-and-songs-collection> support/ideas for parents when teaching nursery rhymes

Socks and shakers.

Fill socks with different items (eg. Pebbles in one, dried pasta in another and milk bottle lids in another). Tie up the socks so the items don’t fall out. Can your child guess what is in the socks by the way they feel and the sounds they make when shook?

**Musical Statues**

All you need is some music and a space to dance. Play the music and stop it every now and again. You and your child must both freeze as soon as the music stops.

Initially, it may take a while for your child to realize the music has paused and to stop dancing, but you will see the difference over time as your child refines their listening skills.

Telephone Game (Chinese whispers)

Start with single words and slowly move up to phrases, then entire sentences as your child becomes more competent at listening.

Make up a word or sentence and whisper it into your child’s ear, who must whisper it to the next family member, who continues passing the message around the table.

The last person to hear the message says it out loud. This usually ends in laughter as the phrases often change and the message is broken.

In time, your child will be able to listen to detail better and convey accurate messages.

You can vary the sentences by using alliterations (e.g. my tiny teddy is talking) and rhyming sentences (e.g. do you have a blue shoe?). Also, change the order of who-whispers-to-who and allow your child to make up messages as well.

**Simon Says**

This classic game is excellent for making your child pay attention and listen to instructions.

Call out instructions by saying, for example, “Simon Says put your hands on your shoulders”. When you give an example that doesn’t begin with “Simon Says”, such as “Jump three times”, your child must not do it.

[](https://www.mediavine.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank)

This means that for each instruction, your child must listen for two details:

* whether or not they must follow the order
* what they need to do

**Some ideas for you to try:**

* Simon says point to your toes
* Simon says touch your eyebrows
* Simon says touch your elbows
* Simon says touch your ankle
* Simon says touch your tongue
* Simon says touch your left shoulder
* Simon says touch your back
* Simon says tickle your armpit
* Simon says touch your right knee
* Simon says touch your fingernail
* Simon says touch both elbows at the same time
* Simon says fold your arms
* Simon says crisscross your legs
* Simon says touch your left shoulder with your right hand
* Simon says wave your arms above your head
* Simon says twist from side to side
* Simon says roll over twice on the ground
* Simon says pretend to be a fish and swim around the room
* Simon says jump up and down ten times
* Simon says turn around two times and then clap your hands
* Simon says wiggle your nose.
* Simon says do three jumping jacks. Then, tap your head twice.
* Simon says blink five times. Then say the word pig.
* Simon says bark three times. Then sit down on the ground.

### ****Draw a Picture following Instructions****

Please feel free to adapt the following idea to meet your child’s level of understanding.

Give your child a piece of paper and coloured crayons/pencils. Ask them to follow your instructions carefully.

Giving your child one instruction at a time, say:

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* Turn your paper over.
* Write your name in the top. If your child cannot write their name independently, write it on a separate piece of paper and encourage them to copy some letters.
* Turn your page over again.
* Draw a sun in the top corner.
* Draw three clouds at the top of your page.
* Draw a tree at the bottom of the page.
* Draw 4 apples on the tree.
* In the middle of the page, draw an aeroplane with 5 windows.
* Draw a big, red stripe on the aeroplane.
* Draw 3 birds next to the airplane.
* Draw some grass on the ground and 3 flowers.

### **I Went to the Zoo and I Saw a…**

This game is more advanced than the previous ones and involves listening as well as memorising.

Choosing any animal names, start the game by saying “I went to the zoo and I saw a monkey”. Your child then responds with “I went to the zoo and I saw a monkey and a lion”. You respond with “I went to the zoo and I saw a monkey, a lion and a tortoise”.

For each turn, repeat the animals that have already been listed, in sequence, then add a new one. You may not repeat an animal.

At first, this may be tricky, but with time you will be amazed at how many animals your child can remember