

## Learning Sounds and Word Meaning

In kindergarten, children build on their communication skills by to making connections between spoken words, written words, and word meaning.

Understanding the meanings of sounds and words helps children communicate with people around them. Children learn to express their ideas and feelings, and grow in their ability to form relationships.



Some of the things your kindergarten child is learning are:

- To understand connections between sounds, letters, words, and pictures
- To express and share stories, ideas, and experiences
- To connect written and spoken words to feelings and experiences
- To experiment with sounds, words, word patterns, rhymes, and rhythms

## Identifying Sounds

**Phonological awareness:** the ability to recognize and identify the different sounds that make up words and language.

**For example:** to be able to identify words that rhyme or picking up on mispronunciation of words.

This skill is a stepping stone to reading and writing. As children learn to recognize distinct sounds, they will soon be able to link those sounds with written words.



## Activities for Recognizing Sounds and Meaning

There are lots of ways you can have fun helping your child learn about sounds!

**"Katie" = /Kay/ and /Tee/  
"Cave, cane, care, cake..."  
"Team, tease, teal, teach..."**

- Help your child identify the different sounds in his or her first name. Together with your child, brainstorm other words with those sounds. First names are an important part of identity, so this activity will be personally meaningful for your child.
- Take some time to enjoy nature while listening for sounds. Next time you and your child are on a walk around your neighbourhood, pause every once in a while and take turns naming all the sounds you can hear.

- Look up some tongue twisters or rhyming children’s songs online or make up your own. Have fun being silly with your child and seeing how fast you can each recite the tongue twisters!
- Help your child write a poem for a friend or neighbour. Focus on using similar word endings or word beginnings throughout the poem. Then present the poem to the recipient – this will also help your child learn about doing nice things for other people.
- Read rhyming books and poems together. The rhythm and rhyming will help children learn to notice different sounds and meanings. Reading together also helps strengthen parent-child relationships.



## Activities to Promote Communication and Understanding

- Many children this age LOVE to tell their own stories. This is a quality that should be encouraged! Telling stories not only helps your child develop language skills, but it will also help your child feel important when he or she knows you are listening.
- Tell your child stories about your own life so that he or she can make connections between spoken words and their real-life meaning.
- Let your child be your guide. Have him or her give you instructions about how to build a tall tower out of blocks (or another activity), while you follow the instructions. This will help your child see the impact of his or her words on other people.



- Read lots of books out loud together. Make connections between what is happening in the book and something that happens in your child’s real life. This will help your child make the connection between written words and their meaning.