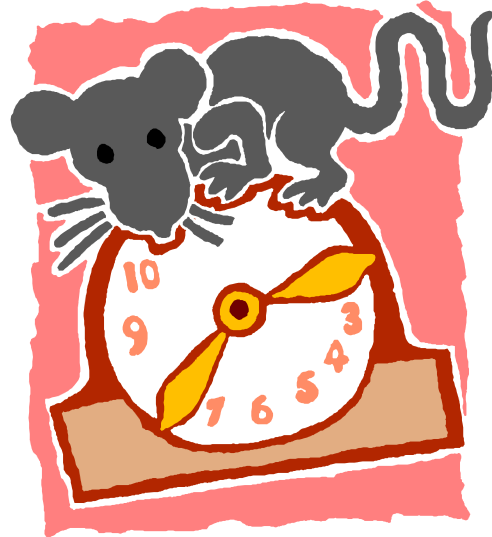


# **News Flash: Nursery Rhymes Are Good for the Brain**

A very important part of learning to read and write is understanding that words and sentences are made up of smaller parts. Readers know that when the small parts change, words sound different and the meaning changes, too. For example, when we change the "m" in "mouse" to "h" it becomes "house." When we add "s" to a word, it becomes plural and adds a syllable. Reciting favorite nursery rhymes helps children hear the changing rhythms and say the changing rhymes over and over. It develops what we call "phonological awareness."



Luckily, children adore rhymes, games and songs that teach them these skills.

## **Play these sound and letter games:**

Enjoy reciting your favorite nursery rhymes and reading poetry books with your child. Say the rhymes over and over. Sometimes stop and let your child fill in the next words. "Hickory dickory dock. The mouse ran up the...." Sometimes say the wrong rhyme. "Hickory dickory dock. The mouse ran up the sock—oops! —clock!"

Sing favorite songs with your children.

Play word games that change the initial letter of words. "What about if everyone's name began with the letter 'L'?" (Laddy, Lommy, Lister, Lothar, Lamma) "What if your name started with B? You'd be called....B....B..... Bisa!"

Put magnetic letters on the door of the frig and read out loud the "words" that your child strings together. "Let's see what your word says now...tsiorumqkpterins."

Clap the syllables in words and sentences. "Can you guess? We're going to the *clap--clap--clap* for story time."

Extra! Extra! For more information about ways to help your child get ready to read and write, talk to your local youth librarian or call Joan Laurion, Dane County UW Extension, 608-224-3722. UW-Extension provides equal opportunities in employment and programming, including Title IX and ADA. Let us know if you need this material in an alternative format.