Daily Sound Games

Five minutes a day, out loud, no paper

Children learn to read faster when they can hear the sounds inside words: that cat and hat rhyme, that sun starts with /s/, that /k/ /a/ /t/ makes cat. These games practise that with no letters at all. Play them anywhere: at the table, in the car, on a walk.

How to play

1. Each week has one page with five games, one for each day. Read the game's "Say" line, then the six words.
2. A word between slashes is a sound, not a letter name: /s/ is the hiss of a snake, /m/ is "mmm". Keep stop sounds short: /t/, not "tuh".
3. Give the child a moment to think. If they miss one, say the answer, have them say it with you, and go on.
4. The answer for each word is in grey after it. Five minutes is plenty: stop while it is still fun.

How the games grow through the year

Weeks 1 to 4	rhymes, clapping the parts of a word, first sounds, joining two small words
Weeks 5 to 12	first and last sounds, saying a rhyme, joining sounds into a word, breaking a word into sounds
Weeks 13 to 24	middle sounds, changing one sound to make a new word, taking a sound away, adding one
Weeks 25 to 28	the same games with sh, ch and th
Weeks 29 to 36	words with blends, like flag, stop and nest, and a review

Focus sounds and where to start

Weeks 1 to 26 each give extra first-sound practice with one focus sound, in the order many phonics programs teach the letters: s, a, t, p, i, n, m, d, g, o, c, k, e, u, r, h, b, f, l, j, v, w, x, y, z, q. The weeks are numbered, not dated: start at week 1 in any month. A child who already rhymes and claps easily can start at week 9.

Week 4 Sound Games

Focus sound: p, /p/ · Read it aloud, one game a day

Day 1

First Sound

Say: Say the word, stretching the start. Ask: "What sound does it start with?" Say the sound, not the letter name.

Move: Touch your head for the first sound.

1. **tag** (/t/)
2. **apple** (/a/)
3. **rug** (/r/)
4. **map** (/m/)
5. **pan** (/p/)
6. **pig** (/p/)

Day 2

Do They Rhyme?

Say: Say both words. Ask: "Do they rhyme?" Rhyming words sound the same at the end.

Move: Thumbs up if they rhyme, thumbs down if not.

1. **nap, map** (yes)
2. **pet, fox** (no)
3. **leg, peg** (yes)
4. **fix, pen** (no)
5. **hen, den** (yes)
6. **run, wet** (no)

Day 3

Clap the Parts

Say: Say the word. Clap each part together. Ask: "How many claps?"

Move: Clap once for each part as you say the word together.

1. **octopus** (3 claps)
2. **monkey** (2 claps)
3. **frog** (1 clap)
4. **pumpkin** (2 claps)
5. **tomato** (3 claps)
6. **tree** (1 clap)

Day 4

Which Two Match?

Say: Say the three words. Ask: "Which two start with the same sound?"

Move: Hold up a finger for each word, then wiggle the two that match.

1. **dog, dad, hen** (dad, dog)
2. **pan, hug, pup** (pan, pup)
3. **box, sun, sad** (sun, sad)
4. **nod, net, leg** (nod, net)
5. **pot, lamp, lip** (lamp, lip)
6. **men, map, sun** (map, men)

Day 5

Put Two Words Together

Say: Say the two words with a little stop between them. Ask: "What word do they make?"

Move: Hold one word in each fist, then bring your fists together.

1. **star … fish** (starfish)
2. **bath … tub** (bathtub)
3. **door … bell** (doorbell)
4. **rain … bow** (rainbow)
5. **pan … cake** (pancake)
6. **sun … flower** (sunflower)