

Episode 4 - Caroline

Literacy Through Music

Books are just the beginning. Tapping out the syllables to their name and singing silly rhymes can all help your child to read.



Sing in different ways

Be brave and sing silly! Children learn to understand words and meaning by listening to more than just the syllables. Experiment with singing in a high or low pitch, or at different volumes. Can your little one sing angrily, happily, sadly or softly? This helps to develop 'auditory discrimination', which is when children learn to discriminate between different sounds, such as the 'f' in 'fly' and the 's' in 'sly'.

Play and sing many different genres

It's easy to stick to children's songs, but music from a wide variety of genres introduces lots of different sounds to your child. Different instruments, voices, accents, and vocabulary.

Singing songs around the home adds new words to your child's vocabulary that form the building blocks for literacy and sound awareness. Check that the songs you are playing are thematically appropriate for your child.

Songs and music often require children to remember both the detail and order of what is heard. This boosts their brain's ability to organise sounds and understand their meaning - a skill that is also required for literacy.

Make up nonsense songs

Being able to read a word on a page is all about understanding how the letters connect with each other. The sound of each letter is important.

Making up nonsense rhymes with your child is a fun way to practise saying new sounds. Can your little one find words that rhyme with their name, or your name? Limericks are great for preschool children, who often find their silly subject matter and sing-song rhythms easy to learn.

Make your own instruments

- Tapping sticks - These can simply be two sticks from the garden or a pair of wooden spoons. Try using sticks made of different materials, with different lengths and thicknesses. Encourage your child to listen to the sound they make, and tap along with the syllables in their name or favourite song. This helps children to break down and learn longer words.
- Shakers - A handful of lentils in an empty bottle can make a good shaker. Always secure the lid. What happens if your child lifts the bottle slowly, as opposed to shaking it? Are the sounds different? Listen to a song together and alternate between shaking the bottle fast and tipping it slowly. This helps your child to tune in to the different sounds.