

Literacy Circle (Rhyming Activities)

1. Introducing 'rhyming' with Dr. Seuss rhyming cards - Matching Game

Invite children to help you review a few pairs of the Dr. Seuss rhyming cards, introducing the concept of 'rhyming' (e.g., "Here's the 'mouse' and here's the 'house'. 'Mouse' and 'house' rhyme - they sound alike - so they are a match" "What do these cards say? 'Car' and 'star' rhyme, they sound alike, so they are a match").

Lay one card from each rhyming pair face up in rows and columns, and stack the other cards in a pile face down. On each turn, a child picks a card from the face down pile and tries to find the rhyming match from the cards face up. (This game will help the children learn which pairs of words rhyme, and will prepare them to play Memory with these cards (activity #2)).

Describe your actions as you explain how to play (e.g., "On each turn, you'll pick a card from this pile, and then try to find the card that rhymes with it from these cards that show the pictures. Let me show you. I picked a 'fox.' Let's look at the cards and see if we can find which word rhymes with 'fox'. Is it fox-tall? Fox-bee? Fox-box? Yes, I think fox sounds like box. 'Fox' and 'box' rhyme"). As children select cards, support them in finding the match by saying pairs of words (e.g., "You have 'bee'. Do you think the rhyme is 'bee-talk' or 'bee-tree'?").

Explain that when children make a match, they should place the cards in the "rhyme pile." When children find a match, describe what they found (e.g., "Look! William has 'talk' and he found 'walk'. 'Talk' and 'walk' rhyme! They are a match. The match goes into the rhyme pile"). Help children take turns trying to find pairs. During each turn, talk about the rhyming words and help children say the rhyming words (e.g., "What card does she have?" "What word rhymes with 'jump'?").

As children learn the rhymes, encourage the turn-taker to name the words and the card that would make a 'match' (e.g., "Tell us what you found" "If you have 'cat' - what card are you looking for that rhymes?"). If the cards start with the same letter or letter sound as children's name in the group you can also point that out (e.g., "'Hat' starts with an 'h' like Henry's name" or "Bee starts with the same /b/ sound as Brian's name").

1A. Introducing Rhyming with children's names

During transitions (e.g., to wash hands, set tables, choose areas), explain to children that you are going to call them by silly rhyming names. Use your name as an example (e.g., "Instead of Ms. Shireen, I might say Ms. Bireen or Ms. Tireen. Bireen and Tireen sound like Shireen"). Use silly rhyming names as much as possible, and call attention to the 'rhyme' (e.g., "Baylor...whose name *rhymes* with Baylor? Taylor *rhymes* with Baylor!"). Try to use the word "rhyme" as many times as possible.

2. Playing "Memory" with Dr. Seuss rhyming cards

Invite children to help you review a few pairs of the Dr. Seuss rhyming cards, introducing the concept of 'rhyming' (e.g., "Here's the 'mouse' and here's the 'house'. 'Mouse' and 'house' rhyme - they sound alike - so they are a match" "What do these cards say? 'Car' and 'star' rhyme, they sound alike, so they are a match"). Ask the children to help you lay the cards face down in rows and columns. As you demonstrate how to play, describe what you are doing and the rules of the game (e.g., "When it's your turn you will flip over two cards. I turned over 'cake' and 'tall'. 'Cake' doesn't rhyme with 'tall' so they don't make a match. So, I'll turn them back over and let the next person try"). Explain that when children make a match, they should place the cards in the "match pile." When children find a match, describe what they found (e.g., "Look! Rebecca turned over 'tall' and 'small'. They rhyme! They are a match. The match goes into the match pile"). Help children take turns trying to find pairs. During each turn, talk about the rhyming words and help children say the rhyming words (e.g., "What did she turn over?" "What word rhymes with 'red'?").

As children learn the rhymes, encourage the turn-taker to name the words and the card that would make a 'match' (e.g., "Tell us what you found" "If you have 'rake' - what card are you looking for to make a match?"). If the cards start with the same letter or letter sound as a child's name you can also point that out (e.g., "'Mouse' starts with the letter 'm' like Martha's name" or "Pup starts with the same /p/ sound as Paul's name").

3. "Go Fish" with Dr. Seuss rhyming cards

Explain how to play (e.g., "We are each going to have 2 cards. When it is your turn, you will ask, "Does anyone have a word that rhymes with ____ (the picture and word on your card)?" If someone has the card that rhymes with your card, they pass it to you, and then you place your pair in the match pile. If no one has the rhyme you asked for, everyone says, "Sorry. Go Fish!" and you pick one from our fish pond here in the middle). Then distribute 2 cards to each child. Invite children to help you spread out the remaining cards face down to be the 'fish pond'. Demonstrate how to play by asking all the children if anyone has the card that rhymes with your card in order to make a pair (e.g., "I have the 'pup.' Does anyone have a word that rhymes with 'pup'?"). If they do, they pass you the card. If they do not, they say "No, sorry. Go fish." Then you have to "fish" for that card.

Display the pairs, and call attention to the names of objects and rhyming words (e.g., "You made a rhyming pair with the ____ and the ____"). Help children place matches in a "rhyme pile." Try to use the word "rhyme" as many times as possible.

4. Simon Says with rhymes; Movement with rhyming names

Explain how to play (e.g., "Today we're going to play 'Simon Says' by listening for words that rhyme - so instead of me saying 'Simon says put your finger on your nose' I'm going to say 'Simon says put your finger on the part of your body that rhymes with bosc. Where could you put your finger? On your 'nose' because 'nose' rhymes with 'bosc' or on your 'toes' because 'toes' also rhymes with 'bosc'" or "Simon says put your hands on something that rhymes with 'bed' - what part of your body rhymes with 'bed'? Head! Head and bed rhyme!"). Try to use the word "rhyme" as much as possible.

Alternately, have all the children stand and ask them to jump when they hear their silly rhyming name (e.g., "Today when you hear a word that rhymes with your name, I want you to jump two times"). You can also use other movements (e.g., touch your toes, reach to the sky, do 5 jumping jacks, etc). You can integrate this kind of silly rhyming with movement throughout the day (e.g., "Walk to your 'bubbies' to get your 'boats'" rather than "Walk to your cubbies to get your coats" OR "It's time to shwash your hands for lunch" instead of 'wash' your hands").

5. "I spy" with rhymes

Explain that you are going to describe something or someone and give a rhyming clue and the children have to guess what or who you are thinking of (e.g., "I spy with my little eye an area of the classroom where children like to build things and it rhymes with 'socks.' What area is it?"). Emphasize the rhymes (e.g., "Yes, blocks and socks rhymes"). Use the word 'rhyme' as many times as possible. Do this with children (e.g., "I spy with my little eye a little girl who is wearing blue jeans and a green t-shirt and her name rhymes with Belizabeth. Who is it?" "Yes, Elizabeth rhymes with Belizabeth"). Play this with colors, numbers, shapes, and other nouns (e.g., classroom centers, clothing, furniture, toys). For example, "I spy with my little eye the color of someone's t-shirt that rhymes with bellow. What color is it?" or "I spy with my little eye a shape that has three sides and looks like a slice of pizza and rhymes with myangle. What is it?" "Yes, triangle rhymes with myangle"). You can use real rhyming words and nonsense rhyming words. Have fun!

This kind of silly rhyming is also lots of fun at meals (e.g., "I see today we are having barrots for lunch." Most often the children will correct you, thinking you are VERY silly, "They're not called 'barrots' they're called 'carrots!'").