

## Ontario Early Years Literacy

**“Bbb”** my name is **Bob**... and I like **bananas, balloons and beetles!**

Reading research shows that there are certain skills children must have knowledge of to learn to read. Phonological awareness is one of these skills. Young children develop phonological awareness as they realize that words in spoken language are made up of separate sounds. They begin to hear and be able to identify the beginning and ending sounds in words. Eventually they can hear and identify the sounds in the middle of words too. Often, children who have difficulty with reading have trouble with phonological awareness

Children begin to understand the link between written language (letters) and spoken language (sounds) after they have developed some phonological awareness. These skills help children sound out words when they begin to read. Children’s ability to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words begins to develop during the preschool years.

### **What can parents do to help build these skills?**

- Sing and say nursery rhymes, finger plays and nonsense rhymes to help children learn to listen to the rhyme patterns
- Say tongue twisters and read books with alliteration to help children begin to focus on initial sounds in words
- Read poetry books like “Alligator Pie” by Dennis Lee
- Play games like “I Spy”. “I spy something blue that rhymes with (or sounds like) bear. What is it? CHAIR.”
- Pick a multi-syllable word and talk about how it has more than one beat (syllable), but it is still just one word. Tap, clap or stomp out the syllables.
- Practice blending (putting together) and segmenting (pulling apart) words using the game “Say it Fast, Say it Slow”. You slowly say di-no-saur and ask your child to say it fast...dinosaur! Next time you say it fast and ask your child to say it slow.