



# Oliver Thomas Phonics Offer



### Our Phonics Offer

At Oliver Thomas, we follow the Letters and Sounds document, a six-phase teaching programme to help practitioners and teachers teach children how the alphabet works for reading and spelling. Phase One activities concentrate on developing children's speaking and listening skills, phonological awareness and oral blending and segmenting. These activities are intended to be used as part of a broad and rich language curriculum that has speaking and listening at its centre, links language with physical and practical experiences and provides an environment rich in print and abundant in opportunities to engage with books. Phase One activities pave the way for children to make a good start in reading and writing. Here, at Oliver Thomas we begin our phonological awareness sessions early for children starting with Phase One. We embed the Phase One adult-led activities in a language-rich provision that serves the best interests of the children by fully recognising their propensity for play and its importance in their development. We deliver high quality play activities which offer many opportunities to enrich children's language across the early years curriculum. Phase One activities are all oral (spoken), children do not have to match letters to sounds at this stage. The emphasis here is on distinguishing between sounds, creating sounds and talking about sounds and beginning to become aware of their own voice and how to hear it.

Phase One activities are arranged under the following seven aspects:

- Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds
- Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – instrumental sounds
- Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – body percussion
- Aspect 4: Rhythm and rhyme
- Aspect 5: Alliteration
- Aspect 6: Voice sounds
- Aspect 7: Oral blending and segmenting.

While there is considerable overlap between these aspects, the overarching aim is for children to experience regular, planned opportunities to listen carefully and talk extensively about what they hear, see and do. Practitioners plan Phase One weekly sessions and integrate the activities according to the developing abilities and interests of the children in their class.



Listening carefully, children can hear the sound of the aeroplane high in the sky.



Children enjoy experimenting with the sounds different objects can make.



Some sounds are loud and scary – you can sing the song, 'I hear thunder.'

## ■ Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – Environmental sounds



Children listen carefully as the leaves crunch under their feet.



Listening to the sounds different animals in the environment make, include imaginary ones such as dragons.

## ■ Aspect 1: General sound discrimination – environmental sounds

Main purpose: To develop children's listening skills and awareness of sounds in the environment.

Sessions:

1. Listening walks – a listening activity that can take place indoors or outdoors. Remind the children about what good listening is: no talking, ears and eyes ready. Listen carefully as you walk. What can you hear: birds singing, wind blowing, trees rustling, dogs barking, children playing. Encourage the children to talk about what they can hear. Model cupping your ears or make big listening ear headbands to really support children to understand their ears are their listening tools. When back together, recall the sounds they have heard and describe the sounds they heard. (CDROM footage)
2. Playing in the garden– Give each child a beater or make drumsticks, for example from short pieces of dowel. Encourage the children to explore the outdoor area and discover how different sounds are made by tapping or stroking, with their beaters, a wooden door, a wire fence, a metal slide, and a few items such as pipes and upturned pots and tree trunks. Ask children to choose a favourite sound. They show their sound to the group. All children make that sound. A 'conductor' raises their hand to signal to the children to play loudly and lowers it to signal playing softly.
3. Mrs Browning has a box - Turn a box on its side with the opening facing away from the children. One by one place between four and six familiar noisy items (e.g. a set of keys, crisp packet, squeaky toy) into the box, pausing to name them and demonstrate the sound each one makes. Sing to the tune of 'Old MacDonald' but using your own name or one of the children's: Mrs...has a box ee i ee i o And in that box she has a... Stop. Gesture and ask the children to listen. Handle one of the objects in the box, out of sight, to make a noise. The children take it in turns to guess what is making the sound. Continue the song but imitating the sound using your voice. 'With a zzz zzz here and a zzz zzz there...' Allow the children to take a turn at making a noise from inside the box and use their names as you sing. (CDROM footage)
4. Describe and find it - Set up a model farmyard. Describe one of the animals but do not tell the children its name. Say, for example: This animal has horns, four legs and a tail. Ask them to say which animal it is. Ask them to make the noise the animal might make. When they are familiar with the game let individual children take the part of the adult and describe the animal for the others to name. This activity can be repeated with other sets of objects such as zoo animals, toy sets based on transport (e.g. aeroplane, car, train, bus, boat) and musical instruments. It can be made more challenging by introducing sets of random objects to describe and name. It can be made more simple by using the real objects to supplement the language.
5. Socks and shakers - Partially fill either opaque plastic bottles or the toes of socks with noisy materials (e.g. rice, peas, pebbles, marbles, shells, coins, tissues, cotton wool). Ask the children to shake the bottles or socks and identify what is inside from the sound the items make. From the feel and the sound of the noisy materials encourage the children to talk about them. Ask questions such as: Where would you find shells?
6. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!



Playing outside encourages children to explore and experiment with the sounds they can hear.

Children love to share the experience of banging a drum.



Children listen carefully to the sounds of musical instruments, they begin to be able to identify which instrument is making which sound.

## ■ Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – Instrumental sounds



Children explore a variety of objects listening to the different sounds they can make.



Children use self-made instruments to explore and learn how sounds can be changed.

## ■ Aspect 2: General sound discrimination – Instrumental sounds

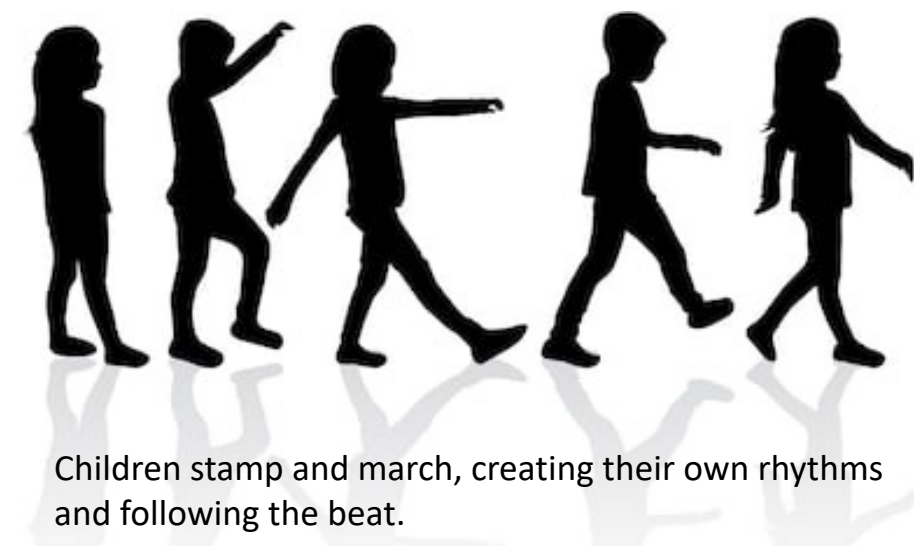
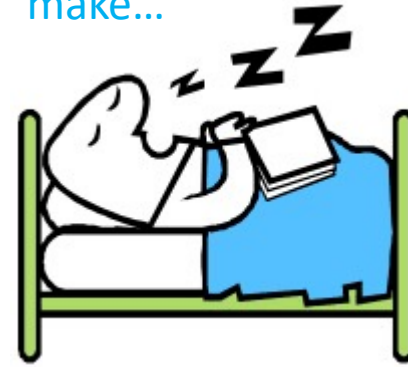
Main purpose: To experience and develop awareness of sounds made with instruments and noise makers.

### Sessions:

1. Band time – Use cardboard rolls, tins, dried peas, rice, pasta, milk bottle tops and lentils to make shakers. Play them in different ways – loudly, softly, slowly, quickly as you are marching, skipping, tip-toeing or stomping. Take turns to conduct using pictures or signs to communicate the different ways of playing. Can children guess what's inside the instrument? Get children to play along with rhythmical stories and rhymes such as Hairy Maclary, or Stomp, Stomp, Roar, Roar Here Come the Dinosaurs. Can children perform their music to another small group?
2. Adjust the volume - Two children sit opposite each other with identical instruments. Ask them to copy each other making loud sounds and quiet sounds. It may be necessary to demonstrate with two adults copying each other first. Then try the activity with an adult with one child. Use cards giving picture or symbol cues to represent loud or quiet (e.g. a megaphone, puppet of a lion; a finger on the lips, puppet of a mouse). Get children to play either loud or quiet and then match the sounds they made with the card symbol or the puppet representing that sound. (CDROM footage)
3. Grandmother's footsteps - 'Grandmother' has a range of instruments and the children decide what movement goes with which sound (e.g. shakers for running on tip-toe, triangle for fairy steps, a drum for stamping). First an adult will need to model being Grandmother. Then a child takes the role. Grandmother stands with her back to the others and plays an instrument. The other children move towards Grandmother in the manner of the instrument while it is playing. They stop when it stops. The first person to reach Grandmother takes over that role and the game starts again.
4. Matching pairs - Show pairs of instruments (e.g. maracas, triangles, sets of claves) to a small group of children. Place one set of the sound makers in a feely bag. The children take turns to select a sound maker from the feely bag. Once all the children have selected a sound maker, remind them to listen carefully. Play a matching sound maker. The child with that sound maker stands up and plays it. This activity can be extended by playing the sound maker behind a screen so that the children have to identify it by the sound alone. (CDROM footage)
5. Drums – Use a selection of objects made from different materials eg: metal pans, plastic buckets, wooden boxes etc., and use them to play the drums to your favourite songs and rhymes. Play them loudly, softly, fast and slow. See if one child can bang a beat and the others in the group can copy it, see if children can copy a rhythm.
6. Mr Bear is in his Cave – now who will dare, now who will dare, to steal a sound from Mr Bear. A collection of instruments are laid out. A child is chosen as the bear and hides his/her face. They turn their back to the group. The song is sung, a child is chosen to sneak over and play an instrument, then goes and sits back down. The 'bear' then identifies which instrument was played, which sound was stolen!
7. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!



Think about other  
sounds our bodies  
make...



Children stamp and march, creating their own rhythms  
and following the beat.

## ■ Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – Body Percussion



Children sing and clap to action  
rhymes, songs and rhythms



Children experiment with  
sounds they make with their  
bodies and the environment



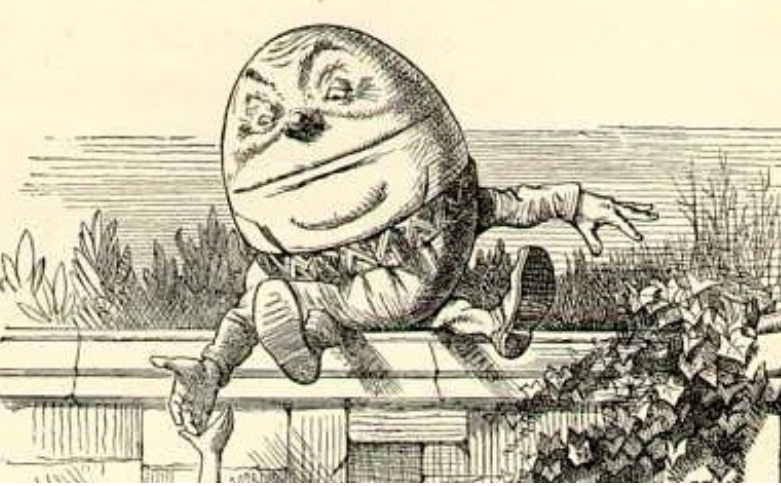
Children create their own clapping rhythms

### ■ Aspect 3: General sound discrimination – Body Percussion

Main purpose: To develop awareness of sounds and rhythms, keeping the beat by remembering patterns of sounds.

Sessions:

1. Body Patterns inside – Make up sound patterns using your body for children to follow for example, clap your hands twice, pat your knees twice, can the children copy? Can you make the rhythm more complex? Can the children still follow? Can the children make up their own body sound patterns for the rest of the group to copy? Sing 'Everybody do this, do this, do this' children copy the actions and sounds.
2. Body Patterns outside – Make up sound patterns using your body for children to follow for example, stamping your feet in a rhythm and then stopping, and then repeating. Can you make the rhythm more complex? Can the children still follow? Can they stamp fast, and then slowly, loudly and then softly? Can they add a clap and a twirl, almost like a sound dance? Can the children make up their own sound dance for the rest of the group to copy?
3. Action Rhymes - Singing songs and action rhymes is a vital part of Phase One. Children need to develop a wide repertoire of songs and rhymes. Include multi-sensory experiences such as action songs in which the children have to add claps, knee pats and foot stamps or move in a particular way. Add body percussion sounds to nursery rhymes, performing the sounds in time to the beat. Encourage the children to be attentive and to know when to add sounds, when to move, and when to be still. (CD footage)
4. Radio Time – Listen to some familiar music, nursery rhymes or songs we know on a CD player and clap along. Can the children use their body to tap out a beat? Are the children able to keep to the rhythm? Can they make loud body noises to accompany the songs and quiet body noises? Do they have a favourite song or rhyme?
5. Noisy Neighbour – This game needs two adults to lead it. Tell a simple story about a noisy neighbour and invite the children to join in. Begin with: Early one morning, the children were all fast asleep – (ask the children to close their eyes and pretend to sleep) – when all of a sudden they heard a sound from the house next door. At this point the second adult makes a sound from behind the screen. The story teller continues: Wake up children. What's that noise? The children take it in turns to identify the sound and then the whole group are encouraged to join in with: Noisy neighbour, please be quiet. We are trying to sleep. Repeat the simple story line with another sound (e.g. snoring, brushing teeth, munching cornflakes, yawning, stamping feet, washing). Encourage the children to add their own ideas to the story about the noisy neighbour.
6. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!



Children know familiar nursery rhymes



Rhyming books are read to children



Children sing and play

## ■ Aspect 4: Rhythm and Rhyme



Remind children of rhymes they know as they are playing: Miss Polly Had a Dolly Who Was Sick

Children sing action songs: 1, 2, 3 ,  
4, 5, Once I Caught a Fish Alive



They accompany songs with musical instruments,  
playing to the beat



## ■ Aspect 4: Rhyme and Rhythm

Main purpose: To experience and appreciate rhythm and rhyme and to develop awareness of rhythm and rhyme in speech.

Sessions:

1. Learning Songs and Rhymes – Sing rhymes incidentally as they occur eg; its raining its pouring as the children get ready to go outdoors in wet weather. Sing or chant nursery rhymes, children should know many by heart. Encourage children to move in appropriate ways related to the rhyme eg; rowing to Row, Row, Row Your Boat or falling down to Ring-a-Ring-a-Roses. Children join in with action rhymes such as ‘Incy, Wincy Spider’ They learn new songs, rhymes and actions. Children sing ‘I’m Being Swallowed by a Boa constrictor.’
2. Listen to the Beat – Use a variety of percussion instruments to play different rhythms. Remind the children to listen carefully and to move in time to the beat – fast, slow, skipping, marching. Keep the beat simple at first eg; for marching, then move on to more complex rhythms for the children for the children to skip or gallop to.
3. Our Favourite Rhymes - Support a group of children to compile a book of their favourite rhymes and songs. They could represent the rhymes in any way they choose. The book can be used to make choices about which rhyme to say during singing time, or used for making independent choices in the book corner. Children may choose to act as teacher selecting rhymes for others to perform, individually or as a group. Have a bag of objects which represent rhymes (e.g. a spider to represent ‘Incy Wincy Spider’, a toy bus for ‘The Wheels on the Bus’, a star for Twinkle, Twinkle, a Sheep for Baa Baa Black Sheep, an egg for Humpty Dumpty etc) and invite the children to choose their favourite. (CD Footage)
4. Rhyming Soup - Ask a small group to sit in a circle so they can see a selection of rhyming objects (e.g. rat, hat, cat) placed on the floor. Use a bowl and spoon as props to act out the song. Invite the children, in turn, to choose an object to put into the soup and place it in the bowl. After each turn, stir the soup and sing the following song to recite the growing list of things that end up in the soup. Sing the first part of the song to the tune of ‘Pop Goes the Weasel’: I’m making lots of silly soup I’m making soup that’s silly I’m going to cook it in the fridge To make it nice and chilly In goes... a fox... a box... some socks... (CD Footage)
5. Transition Rhymes – Using rhyme and song across the nursery as a way of supporting children transition from one situation to another. Supporting both phonological awareness and emotional regulation when changing from one thing to another. The consistency across rooms and space captures all children in Oliver Thomas. For example, ‘Its Time to Go Home,’ ‘Its Time to Tidy Up,’ ‘Its Time to Go Inside.’
6. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa’s Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!



Make sure the book collection includes books with lots of alliterative rhymes and jingles

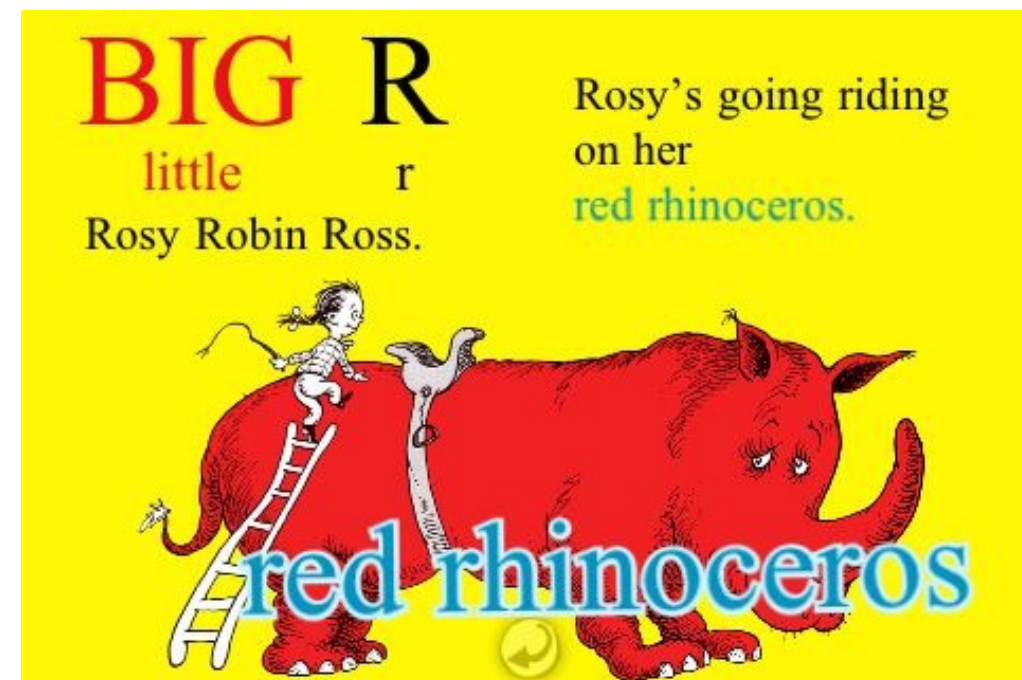


Use classic children's stories to illustrate alliteration

## ■ Aspect 5: Alliteration



Join children in the sand tray and introduce alliterative tongue twisters such as: 'She sells seashells'



Model alliteration:  
'Chip-chop, chip-chop'

## ■ Aspect 5 : Alliteration

Main purpose: To develop understanding of alliteration. When children begin to hear and recognize that words start with the same sound they are learning to identify and isolate phonemes, an important part of the early literacy process.

### Sessions:

1. I Spy Names - With a small group of children sitting in a circle, start the game by saying I spy someone whose name begins with... and give the sound of the first letter, for example 's' for Satish. Then ask: Who can it be? Satish stands up, everyone says his name and he carries on the game, saying I spy someone whose name begins with..., and so on. If any children call out the name before the child with that name, still let the child whose name it is take the next turn. If the children find separating out the first sound too hard in the early stages, the adult can continue to be the caller until they get the hang of it.
2. Sounds Around - Make sure that word play with initial sounds is commonplace. Include lots of simple tongue twisters to ensure that children enjoy experimenting with words that are alliterative. Use opportunities as they occur incidentally to make up tongue twisters by using children's names, or objects that are of particular personal interest to them (e.g. David's dangerous dinosaur, Millie's marvellous, magic mittens).
3. Name Play - Call out a child's name and make up a fun sentence starting with the name (e.g. Ben has a big, bouncy ball, Kulvinder keeps kippers in the kitchen, Tim has ten, tickly toes, Fiona found a fine, fat frog). Ask the children to think up similar sentences for their own names to share with others
4. Digging for Treasure - Collect two sets of objects suitable for use in the sand tray. Each set of objects must have names beginning with the same initial sound. Choose initial sounds for each set that sound very different from one another. Bury the objects in preparation for the session. As the children uncover the treasure, group the objects by initial sound and each time another is added recite the content of that set: Wow! You've found a car. Now we have a cup, a cow, a candle and a car.
5. Our Sound Box/Bag - Make collections of objects with names beginning with the same sound. Create a song, such as 'What have we got in our sound box today?' and then show the objects one at a time. Emphasise the initial sound (e.g. s-s-s-snake, s-s-s-sock, s-s-s-sausage)
6. Mirror Play - Provide a mirror for each child or one large enough for the group to gather in front of. Play at making faces and copying movements of the lips and tongue. Introduce sound making in the mirror and discuss the way lips move, for example, when sounding out 'p' and 'b', the way that tongues poke out for 'th', the way teeth and lips touch for 'f' and the way lips shape the sounds 'sh' and 'm'.
7. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack

Children play with the everyday sounds they hear: ‘Nee-naw, Nee-naw!’



Tick-tock!

Children make sound trumpets



■ Aspect 6: Voice Sounds



Weeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeeee!

Play ‘Who’s That Hiding Under the Rug?’



Introduce ‘Metal Mike’ the robot to exemplify segmenting to the children.

## ■ Aspect 6 : Voice Sounds

Main purpose: To distinguish between the differences in vocal sounds, including oral blending and segmenting.

Sessions:

1. Voice Sounds - Show children how they can make sounds with their voices, for example: ■ Make your voice go down a slide – wheee! ■ Make your voice bounce like a ball – boing, boing ■ Sound really disappointed – oh ■ Hiss like a snake – ssssss ■ Keep everyone quiet – shshshsh ■ Gently moo like a cow – mmmoooo ■ Look astonished – oooooo! ■ Be a steam train – chchchchch ■ Buzz like a bumble bee – zzzzzzz ■ Be a clock – tick tock. This can be extended by joining single speech sounds into pairs (e.g. ee-aw like a donkey).
2. Making Trumpets - Make amplifiers (trumpet shapes) from simple cones of paper or lightweight card and experiment by making different noises through the cones. Model sounds for the children: the up and down wail of a siren, the honk of a fog horn, a peep, peep, peep of a bird. Contrast loud and soft sounds. Invite the children to share their favourite sound for the rest of the group to copy. Use the trumpets to sound out phonemes that begin each child's name.
3. Sound Story Time - Discuss with the children how they can use their voices to add sounds to stories such as Bear Hunt, Chicken Licken or The Three Billy Goats Gruff. Repeat favourite rhymes and poems in different voices together (e.g. whispering, growling, shouting, squeaking) and discuss the differences.
4. Who's That Hiding Under the Rug? – In a circle one child goes out while the group choose who should hide under the rug. The child comes back and the group sing, 'Who's that hiding under the rug?, who can it be? Who can it be?' The group ask the hiding child to say 'hello' – can the other child guess who it is just from the voice? Think of another question the group can ask the hiding child so the guessing child can hear more of their voice when they answer. Once they have guessed, choose another child to hide under the rug and another to be the guesser / listener.
5. Metal Mike - Encourage a small group of children to sit in a circle or facing the front so they can see you and Metal Mike (a toy robot computer). Have ready a bag of objects (e.g. cat, dog, cup, sock) and sound out and blend the phonemes in their names. Ask each child in turn to take out an object from a bag. Hold it up and tell the group that Metal Mike is a computer and so he talks with a robot voice. Ask the children to name the object as Metal Mike would and demonstrate it for them in a robotic voice (e.g. 'c-a-t'). Feed the object or picture into Metal Mike and encourage the group first to listen to you and then join in as you say the word exaggerating the sound of each phoneme, followed by blending the phonemes to make the word.
6. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullaballoo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!

Play I-Spy



Children play 'Cross the River'



Children play 'What's in the Bag?'



## ■ Aspect 7: Oral Blending & Segmenting

Adults model simple segmenting & blending: 'Put on your c-oa-t' and 'Put on your h-oo-d'



Introduce a 'talking toy' to model segmenting words.

## ■ Aspect 7 : Oral Blending and Segmenting

Main purpose: To develop oral blending and segmenting of sounds in words in preparation for reading and writing.

Sessions:

1. Modelling - when giving children instructions or asking questions the adult can segment the last word into separate phonemes and then immediately blend the sounds together to say the word (e.g. It's time to get your c-oa-t, coat! or Touch your t-o-e-s, toes! Who can touch their f-ee-t, feet?) Use only single-syllable words for oral blending.
2. Toy Talk - Introduce to the children a soft toy that can only speak in 'sound-talk'. The children see the toy whispering in the adult's ear. To add to the activity, as the toy whispers the adult repeats the sounds, looks puzzled and then says the word straight afterwards. For example: What would Charlie like for tea today? The toy speaks silently in the adult's ear and the adult repeats 'ch-ee-se' looking puzzled and then, says with relief 'cheese!' Now invite the children to see if they can speak like the toy: Do you think you could try to toy talk? Say ch-ee-se: (the children repeat 'ch-ee-se'). Ask the toy again What else would you like? Be careful to think of items with names of only single syllables (e.g. fish, cake, pie, soup). Use different scenarios: What does the toy like to do in the playground? (hop, skip, jump, run, etc.). As the children become more confident, make some errors – blend 'skim' for 'skip', for example, and ask them to catch you out by giving the correct blend. Encourage the children to ask the toy questions with yes/no answers (e.g. Can you sing? Y-e-s/N-o). Play 'What's in the Bag?' letting Charlie pull out each object and segmenting the words. Children blend them back.
3. Which One? - Lay out a selection of familiar objects with names that contain three phonemes (e.g. leaf, sheep, soap, fish, sock, bus). Check that all the children can recognise each object. Bring out the sound-talking toy and ask the children to listen carefully while it says the names of one of the objects in sound-talk so they can help it to put the sounds together and say the word. The toy then sound-talks the word, leaving a short gap between each sound. Encourage the children to say the word and identify the object. All the children can then repeat the sounds and blend them together – it is important that they do this and don't simply listen to the adult doing so.
4. Cross the River - Choose a selection of objects with two or three phonemes as above. There can be more than one of the same object. Make a river across the floor or ground outside with chalk or ropes. Give each child or pair of children an object and check that all the children know the names of the objects. The toy calls out the name of an object in sound-talk (e.g. p-e-g). The children who have that object blend the sounds to make the word and cross the river.
5. I Spy - Place on the floor or on a table a selection of objects with names containing two or three phonemes (e.g. zip, hat, comb, cup, chain, boat, tap, ball). Check that all the children know the names of the objects. The toy says I spy with my little eye a z-i-p. Then invite a child to say the name of the object and hold it up. All the children can then say the individual phonemes and blend them together 'z-i-p, zip'.
6. Sound based stories – eg: Peace At Last, Polar Bear, Polar Bear What do You Hear? Shhh!, Walking Through the Jungle, Lullabyhullabaloo! Handa's Noisy Night. Choo Choo Clickety-Clack!