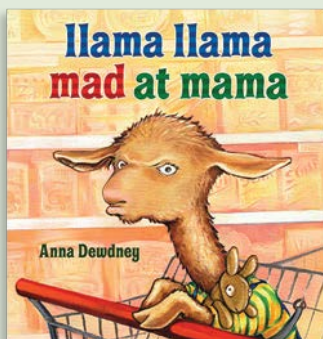


Book Nook

This month's Book Nook topic is...



Building Sound Awareness with *Llama, Llama, Mad at Mama*

Sound awareness, also known as “phonological awareness”, means understanding that words can be broken down into syllables and syllables can be broken down into individual sounds. Having an awareness of these sounds prepares children for connecting the letters they see on a page with the sounds they represent, which is critical for making sense of print.

Rhyming books are great tools for promoting sound awareness. In fact, one of the first signs that a child is developing sound awareness is when he starts to recognize rhymes in books or songs. At The Hanen Centre, we use a strategy called “Listen... and Find One Like It” to help children pay attention or “tune in” to words that start (alliteration) or end (rhyme) with the same sound.

Let's look at some ways you can apply this strategy with a fun rhyming book.

The Book

Llama, Llama, Mad at Mama, by Anna Dewdney.

Why we chose it

This endearing book is about a little llama who gets bored and frustrated while out shopping with her mama, but soon realizes that any activity can be fun when she can do it with her mama – her favorite person to spend time with! The entire book is written in rhyme so it's great for building sound awareness.

The strategy – Listen... and Find One Like It

This strategy works exactly how it sounds.

Step 1 – Listen

When reading (or singing) with your child, draw his attention to rhyming words by pointing them out after you've completed a rhyming section and stressing the rhyming words as you say them. If you're reading *Llama, Llama, Mad at Mama*, you could say: "Listen, 'fun' and 'sun' rhyme – they sound the same at the end. Listen. 'Fun'. 'Sun'."

Step 2 – Find One Like It

Now it's time to encourage your child to find another rhyming word. You could say: "Let's think of another word that sounds like 'fun' and 'sun'. How about 'run'? 'Run' sounds like 'fun' and 'sun'. 'Fun,' 'sun' and 'run' all rhyme. They all sound the same at the end of the word."

Many young children won't yet be able to produce a rhyme, and that's fine! Exposing them to the idea of rhyming words will build their sound awareness. Offer many of your own examples of rhyming words before expecting them to come up with their own the first time you introduce the "Listen... and find one like it" game.

The first time you read the book

During the first read, you don't want to interrupt the book too much because your child is just getting familiar with the story. But something simple you can do that won't interfere with the flow of the reading is to emphasize the rhyming words as you say them (the rhyming words in this book are at the end of each line).

For example, on the page where Llama's mom is making her try on clothing, you could say:

"Try it on and take it **off**,

Pull and wiggle, itch and **cough**."

As you read, you can also pause before the second rhyming word ("cough" in this example) to see if your child wants to try to fill in the missing word.

The second time you read the book

Now that you've been through the book once, you can pause to have a little conversation about the rhyming words. You can read a page, and then say "Listen. 'crunch' sounds like 'lunch'. 'Crunch' and 'lunch' rhyme. Do you hear how they sound the same at the end of the word? 'Crunch'. 'Lunch'."

Then you can get your child thinking about other rhyming words by suggesting a word that rhymes with 'crunch'. You could say, "Now let's think of another word that rhymes with 'crunch' and 'lunch'. Hmm. How about 'munch'? 'Munch' sounds like 'crunch' and 'lunch', doesn't it? 'Crunch,' 'lunch,' and 'munch' all rhyme. They all sound the same at the end of the word." Children often enjoy this little game, so you can probably do it on every page!

The third time you read the book

In this reading, point out other rhymes you might have missed in exactly the same way you did for 'crunch' and 'lunch'. Since your child has now heard many rhyme examples, for the "find one like it" part of the strategy, you can ask him or her to come up with a word. For example, there's a part in the book where Mama Llama says, "I think shopping is boring **too**, but at least I'm here with **you**." You can say, "Can you think of another word that rhymes with 'too' and 'you'?" Then wait quietly for a few seconds to see if they attempt to fill in a word. If you wait for five to ten seconds and your child doesn't respond, you can then go ahead and help him by offering an example: "What about 'poo'?" "'Too,' 'you', and 'poo' all sound the same at the end – they all rhyme."

This strategy can be a lot of fun and gets really silly quickly as children often start making up nonsense words when they can't think of a real word that rhymes. After a while, try to get your child to find rhymes in other books you read together or in songs or nursery rhymes he likes.

Keep it going!

Now that you've had fun using the Listen and Find One Like It strategy during book reading, try using it in other contexts where you encounter words that rhyme. Because this strategy is all about pointing out the way words sound, your child doesn't need to see the words written down – you could point out rhyming words in everyday conversation or while you're sharing songs together. For example, the last part of the nursery rhyme "Baa Baa, Black Sheep" is "Baa baa, black sheep, have you any wool?/ Yes sir, yes sir, three bags full". You could say, "Did you hear that? 'Wool' and 'full' rhyme. They sound the same at the end of the word. *Wool. Full.*"

Happy sound awareness building!

We hope you enjoyed this Book Nook post.

If you have any questions, comments or suggestions, feel free to [send us your feedback](#).