**Phonological Sensitivity**

This is the ability to hear and manipulate the smaller sounds in words. Most children who have difficulty in reading have trouble in phonological sensitivity. Examples of phonological sensitivity include:

- the ability to say whether or not two words rhyme (Do “cat” and “hat” rhyme? Do “cat” and “dog” rhyme?)
- the ability to say words with sounds or word chunks left out (What word would we have if we took the “Buh” sound away from “bat”?)
- the ability to put two word chunks together to make a word (What word would we have if you put “cow” and “boy” together?)

Phonological sensitivity can be developed by playing word games with your child: finding rhymes (“cat” and “hat”), saying words slowly (“bub – bles”), playing with beginning sounds (“pig,” “big” and “wig”), singing songs and other activities.

*Some ideas for developing phonological sensitivity:*

1. Say and play with words that start the same as the child’s name. Then move on to other names your child knows. You can do the same for the ending sounds too.

2. Draw attention to the sounds and syllables of spoken words through word play activities such as rhyming, focusing on beginning sounds of words, blending sounds together to make words, and segmenting or pulling words apart into syllables and sounds. Make these games silly and fun. . . nonsense is OK!

3. Say nursery rhymes and other rhymes and do finger plays with your child; read books that rhyme. When reading familiar rhymes, stop before a rhyming word and encourage the child to fill in the rhyme. Your librarian will be able to help you find good rhyming books.

4. Be attentive to a child’s efforts to play with words, and encourage this practice. Allow time for your child to think and speak, without jumping in to finish your child’s sentences.

5. Sing with your child. Songs and music helps children with rhythm and with breaking words into syllables.

6. Play music for your child. Learn songs to sing together. Listen to a variety of children’s and adult music.

7. Repeat rhymes and songs so your child becomes familiar with them and says them him/herself. Check out rhymes and music cassettes from the library for new ideas.