

## “LEARNING ON THE GO” Early Literacy Activities For Tots

Being able to hear the sounds that make up words helps children sound out written words later when they begin to read. You can help your pre-reader become aware of the smaller sounds in words by reading poetry and other fun rhyming books. If you don't have these types of books at home, look for them at the library or neighborhood garage sales. Singing lullabies to babies and Mother Goose favorites to your toddler also helps develop this early literacy skill. Once your child is familiar with the rhyme, pause and let him fill in the missing word like “Jack and Jill went up the \_\_\_\_\_, to fetch a pail of \_\_\_\_\_.” If you're driving together in the car, play tapes of nursery rhymes, songs or favorite storybooks. Talking about things around the house that all begin with the same sound like *spoon*, *scissors* and *stove* also increases this sound awareness. Another way is to play word games. For example, ask your child to think of words that rhyme with *bat* or ask what would be left if you took the “k” sound out of *cat*. This helps your child begin to understand that spoken words are made up of small, separate sounds. Another word game children enjoy is using silly, nonsense words in place of real words. Telling your preschooler “let's get in the *dar* (car) and go to the *sark* (park) teaches fun word play.

Early literacy is what children know about reading and writing *before* they can actually read and write. The activities mentioned above build **phonological awareness** (being able to hear and play with the smaller sounds in words), one of the six pre-reading skills your child can start learning from birth. For more information check out [pbskids.org/lions/](http://pbskids.org/lions/) or call the Healthy Start Council at 728-KIDS.