

Back to Our Roots with Oral Language!

Talk to them, sing to them, and read to them!

drjean.org

drjeanandfriends.blogspot.com

Oral language was, is, and always will be the foundation of literacy. Children need to speak in complete sentences, organize their thoughts, and speak clearly. The GREAT news is that it's FREE and can be integrated daily in your classroom through a simple, common sense approach that includes:

- *Giving children time to "play" and communicate with friends in learning centers.
- *Modeling complete sentences and good grammar.
- *Taking time to listen to children and respect what they have to say.
- *Quiet time for children to think and organize their thoughts.
- *Value children's imaginations and creativity.
- *Asking open-ended questions.
- *Parent involvement to encourage oral language at home. TURN IT OFF!
- *Finger plays, rhymes, songs, chants, and poems.
- *Show, share, and then some!
- *Partner activities and small group projects.
- *Read, read, read to familiarize children with the language of books.
- *Expecting children to answer in a complete sentence. (This could be a meaningful plan for the entire school with support from administrators, special teachers, lunchroom helpers, etc.) Model how a sentence should sound and have children repeat it.

Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the ability to recognize sounds in oral language (rhyme, alliteration, syllables, etc.). Language is made up of words that can be broken into syllables. Those syllables can be broken into individual sounds or phonemes. Children must first hear the sounds before they can relate them to letters (phonics). A great place to start on the road to phonemic awareness is with nursery rhymes.

Websites

Here are a few websites with downloadable rhymes:

curry.edschool.virginia.edu/go/wil/rimes_and_rhymes
readwritethink.org enchantedlearning.com
literateactive.com teachersandfamilies.com

Piggy Back Songs

Sing traditional nursery rhymes to tunes such as "100 Bottle Pop on the Wall," "Yankee Doodle," "Sweet Betsy from Pike," and "Gilligan's Island."

Story Elements

Discuss the characters, setting, problem, resolution, etc. in nursery rhymes.

Rhyme a Week

Select a rhyme each week and write it on a poster or language experience chart. Reread the rhyme each day.

- *Clap the syllables.
- *Put dots under each word to help children track.
- *Find words that rhyme.
- *Listen for words that start the same.
- *Look up unusual words in the dictionary.

Nursery Rhyme Club

Make a poster that says "Nursery Rhyme Club." Whenever a child can say a rhyme, they get to sign their name on the poster. It would also be fun to give them a membership card!

Dramatize

Let children act out nursery rhymes.

Finger Plays Forever!

Finger plays are perfect for engaging children's attention before a lesson. Their eyes, hands, and minds will calm down as they participate with their classmates. The rhymes are also a useful way to pass time when you have a few extra minutes or are waiting for friends to clean up or wash their hands.

Choose one new finger play each week to introduce to your class.

Write it on a poster or large table.

Make a copy and glue it on an index card. Punch a hole and save on a book ring and soon you'll have a "ring of rhymes."

Create a class book of finger plays by having children illustrate their favorites.

Send home copies of finger plays so parents can enjoy them with their children.

Practice saying the rhyme to yourself so it will be familiar when you teach it to your students. Let your eyes, facial expression, body language, and enthusiasm capture your children's interest. Say the rhyme several times so children will feel more confident and comfortable saying it. Children LOVE exaggeration, so vary how you say the rhymes. You could do pirate style (talk out of the side of your mouth), monster style (talk with a loud, deep voice), mouse style (talk with a high squeaky voice), or take on the persona of a character in the rhyme, like the alligator or daddy duck. Remember, if you're enjoying yourself, the children will probably reflect your happiness!

These finger plays are free, fun and GREEN! Can't get much better than that!

*If you go to drjean.org you will see a link to YouTube so you can actually watch me demonstrate the finger plays.

HERE IS A TURTLE

Here is a turtle.	(Make fist.)
He lives in a shell.	
He likes his home	
Very well.	
When he gets hungry	(Stick out thumb and wiggle.)
He comes out to eat.	
Then he goes back into	(Tuck thumb back in fist.)
His house to sleep.	

ME

I've got ten little fingers,	(Hold up both hands.)
And ten little toes,	(Point to feet.)
Two little eyes,	(Point to eyes.)
And a mouth and a nose.	(Point mouth and then nose.)
Put them all together,	(Circle arms as if hugging.)
And what have you got?	(Hands on hips.)
You've got me, baby,	(Put thumbs in chest.)
And that's a lot!	(Wiggle hips.)

HAVE A CUP OF TEA

Here's a cup.	(Hold up right hand.)
And here's a cup.	(Hold left hand.)
And here's a pot of tea.	(Put hands together.)
Pour a cup.	(Pretend to pour in right hand.)
And pour a cup.	(Pour in left hand.)
And have a cup with me!	(Pretend to drink.)

KING KONG

(Say "King Kong" in a loud voice & "teeny tiny monkey" in a squeaky voice.)	
KING KONG	(Flex arms.)
Was just a teeny tiny monkey	(Hold up pinky.)
Compared to my love for you.	(Cross arms over chest and then extend.)
KING KONG	(Flex arms.)
Was just a teeny tiny monkey	(Hold up pinky.)
Compared to my love for you.	(Cross arms over chest and then extend.)
I love you day	(Make circle with arms.)
And night.	(Lay head on hands.)
My love is out of sight.	(Hands in air.)
KING KONG	(Flex arms.)
Was just a teeny	
Tiny monkey	(Hold up pinky.)
Compared to my love for you!	(Softly say this line as you point to children.)

HERE IS A BUNNY

Here is a bunny	(Hold up index and middle fingers.)
With ears so funny.	(Wiggle fingers.)
And here is his	
Hole in the ground.	(Make hole with fist of the other hand.)
At the slightest noise he hears,	
He pricks up his ears,	(Wiggle fingers.)
Then hops to his	
Hole in the ground!	(Pretend to hop bunny ears into the hole.)

GRANDMA'S GLASSES

(I learned this one my first day of kindergarten!)

These are grandma's glasses.	(Make circles around eyes.)
This is grandma's hat.	(Cup hands and place on head.)
And this is the way	
She folds her hands.	(Fold hands and put
And puts them in her lap.	in them in your lap.)
<i>Say with a deep voice:</i>	
These are grandpa's glasses.	(Make circles around eyes.)
This is grandpa's hat.	(Pretend to put on a hat.)
And this is the way	
He folds his arms	(Cross arms and fold.)
Just like that!	

MR. TURKEY

Mr. Turkey went for	(Start with hands behind your back.)
A walk one day	(Bring right thumb out in front of you.)
In the very best	
Of weather.	
He met Mr. Duck	(Bring left thumb out in front.)
Along the way	
And they talked	(Have thumbs look at each other.)
Together.	
"Gobble, gobble, gobble."	(Wiggle right thumb.)
"Quack, quack, quack."	(Wiggle left thumb.)
"Good-bye."	(Bow right thumb.)
"Good-bye."	(Bow left thumb.)
And they both walked back!	(Wiggle thumbs behind your back.)

MOUSIE BROWN

Up the tall white candlestick	(Hold right arm high in the air.)
Went little mousie brown.	(Wiggle left index finger up arm.)
But when he got up to the top,	
He could not get back down.	(Wiggle finger back and forth.)
He called for Grandma.	(Cup hands around your mouth
"Grandma! Grandma!"	as you pretend to yell.)
But Grandma was in town.	(Open hands and shake head.)
So little mousie curled right up	(Stick left index finger in right palm.)
And rolled right down.	(Make fists with hands and roll down
	in front of you.)

MISS MOLLY

Miss Molly had a dolly	(Cradle arms and rock.)
Who was sick, sick, sick.	
So she called for the doctor	(Pretend to hold a phone next to your ear.)
To come quick, quick, quick.	
The doctor came	(Pretend to hold up bag.)
With his bag and his hat.	(Touch head.)
And he knocked on the door	
With a rat-a-tat-tat.	(Pretend to knock.)
He looked at the dolly	
And he shook his head.	(Shake head.)
He said, "Miss Molly	
Put her straight to bed."	(Point finger.)
He wrote on some paper	
For some pills, pills, pills.	(Pretend to write.)
"I'll be back in the morning	
With the bills, bills, bills."	(Wave good-bye.)

TWO LITTLE BLACK BIRDS

Two little black birds	
Sitting on a hill	(Make fists and stick up thumbs.)
One name Jack	(Wiggle right thumb.)
and one named Jill.	(Wiggle left thumb.)
Fly away Jack.	(Wiggle right thumb behind back.)
Fly away Jill.	(Wiggle left thumb behind back.)
Come back Jack.	(Bring back right thumb.)
Come back Jill.	(Bring back left thumb.)

Additional verses:

Two little red birds sitting on a wall.
One named Pam and one named Paul...
Two little blue birds sitting in the tree.
One named Brad and one named Bree...
Two little yellow birds sitting on a sled.
One named Tami and one named Ted...

TEN LITTLE FRIENDS

Ten little friends	(Hold up fingers.)
Went out to play	(Wiggle.)
On a very bright and sunny day.	
And they took a little walk.	
Walk, walk, walk.	(Walk fingers in front of your body.)
And they had a little talk.	
Talk, talk, talk.	(Put fingertips together.)
They climbed a great big hill	(Move fingers over your head.)
And stood on the top very still.	(Keep hands still.)
Then they all tumbled down	(Roll hands around and down.)
And fell to the ground.	
We're so tired, they all said.	(Hold up fingers.)
So they all went home and went to bed.	
10 - 9 - 8 - 7 - 6 -	
5 - 4 - 3 - 2 - 1.	(Put down fingers one at a time.)

THIS LITTLE GIRL

This little girl is ready for bed. (Hold up index finger and wiggle.)
On the pillow she lays her head. (Open palm and lay finger down.)
Wrap the covers around her tight. (Wrap fist around finger.)
That's the way she spends the night. (Rock hand.)
Morning comes, she opens her eyes.
Off with a toss The covers fly. (Open fist.)
She jumps out of bed, (Hold up finger.)
Eats her breakfast, (Pretend to feed finger some food.)
And brushes her teeth. (Pretend to brush teeth on finger.)
She gets dressed and (Pretend to dress finger.)
Brushes her hair. (Pretend to brush hair.)
Now she's ready and on her way, (Dance finger around.)
To work and play at school (insert the name of your school) all day.

This little boy... (Do similar motions with the opposite index finger.)

HEIDI HI AND LOUIE LOW

Every time Heidi High speaks use a high, soft voice. Every time Louie Low talks use a deep, loud voice. Begin by sticking up your thumbs. Wiggle your right thumb and say, "This is Heidi High." Wiggle your left thumb and say, "This is Louie Low." Tuck your thumbs in your hands and extend them to either side of you as you begin telling the story below.

One day *Heidi High* opened her door (open fingers), went outside (stick out right thumb), and closed her door (close fingers). She said (wiggle right thumb), "*What a beautiful day! I'm going to visit my friend Louie Low.*" So *Heidi* went up the hill and down the hill and up the hill and down the hill (move right thumb up and down in front of body until it reaches your left fist). She knocked on the front door and said (pretend to knock on left fist with right hand), "*Oh, Louie Low. Oh, Louie Low. Let me try the back door.*" (Knock on opposite side of left fist.) "*Oh, Louie Low. Oh, Louie Low. I guess he's not home.*" So *Heidi* went up the hill and down the hill and up the hill and down the hill (move right thumb up and down back in front of your body). When she got home, she opened her door, went inside, and shut her door (open fingers, tuck in thumb, then close fingers to make a fist).

The next day *Louie Low* opened his door (open fingers), went outside (stick out left thumb), and closed his door (close fingers). He said (wiggle left thumb), "*What a beautiful day! I'm going to go visit my friend Heidi High.*" Continue same as *Heidi* did on the previous day...

The next day both *Heidi High* and *Louie Low* opened their doors (open fingers), went outside (stick out thumbs), and closed their doors (close fingers). *Heidi* said (wiggle right thumb), "*What a beautiful day! I'm going to go visit my friend Louie Low.*" And *Louie* said (wiggle left thumb), "*What a beautiful day! I'm going to visit my friend Heidi High.*" So they both went up the hill and down the hill (move thumbs toward each other until they meet in front of your body) until they ran into each other. They danced and played and had the best time (wiggle thumbs). After a while *Heidi* said, "*Well, Louie, I better go home.*" And *Louie* said, "*Well, Heidi, I better go home.*" So they gave each other a hug (hug thumbs), and they both went up the hill and down the hill (wiggle thumbs apart to opposite sides of the body). When they got home they opened their doors (open fingers), went inside (tuck in thumbs), closed their doors (close fingers), and went to sleep (quietly put hands together and lay your head on them).

Singing Letters and Sounds

Music is MAGIC! These songs are a delightful way to put letters and sounds in children's brains. You can use them at circle time to start your day, or use them for a "brain break" when children need to release wiggles. Make up your own movements, or let children create dances for the songs.

ABC Kick Box

Let's all jump up and kick box the alphabet. (Dukes up, shoulders back, elbows in and make small circles with fists.)

Jab with your right hand and say the letter; then punch across with your left as you make the sound. Back on your right foot to begin.

A - /a/...

Who Let the Letters Out? ("Who Let the Dogs Out?")

Who let the A out?

/a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/

Who let the B out? etc.

*Here's a great idea for a school program. Let children decorate old T-shirts with dots. Make puppy headbands. Pin a different letter to each child. Children come out of a doghouse as their letter is sung in the song.

The Alphabet in My Mouth ("He's Got the Whole World in His Hands")

I've got the whole alphabet in my mouth. I've got the whole alphabet in my mouth.

I've got the whole alphabet in my mouth, and I can read.

I've got A - /a/ /a/ - in my mouth.

I've got B - /b/ /b/ - in my mouth.

I've got C - /c/ /c/ - in my mouth, and I can read.

Hint! Sing using sign language.

Sing and Sign ("Where Is Thumbkin?")

Children repeat each line.

Where is A? (Hands behind back.)

Here I am. (Make sign for "a.")

What do you say, A?

/a/, /a/, /a/.

Happy Birthday Letters

Yo, A,, it's your birthday.

Let's all read

Like your birthday.

/a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/ /a/

Name Games

Little Red Box - Cover a small box with red paper. Write children's names on sentence strips and glue their picture by their name. Pull one name at a time out of the red box and sing to them.

I wish I had a little red box
To put my child's name in.
I'd take him/her out and go kiss, kiss, kiss, (smack in the air)
And put him back again.
...Continue singing each child's name.

Important Person - Hold one child at a time in your lap as you sing this song to the tune of "Lassie and Laddie."

Child's name is important, important, important.
Child's name is important to you and to me.
At work and at play
He/she does his/her best each day.
Child's name is important to you and to me.

Hickety Pickety Bumblebee - This chant is great for phonological awareness. Slap your thighs and clap hands to get a beat going.

Hickety pickety bumblebee,
Who can say their name for me?
First child's name.
Clap it. (Clap out the syllables in the child's name.)
Whisper it. (Whisper the syllables.)
No sound. (Mouth the syllables.)
Hickety pickety bumblebee,
Who can say their name for me?
Second child's name...etc.

I Am Special - Place a hand mirror in the bottom of a shoebox and put the lid on top. Explain to the children that the most wonderful thing in the whole world is in the box. "It's so special there's only one like it in the world!" Watch children's smiles as they open the box and see their faces! End by singing this song to the tune of "Ferer Jacques."

I am special. I am special.
Take a look. You will see.
Someone very special.
Someone very special.
And it's me! And it's me!

Echo Chants

Tooty Ta

Chorus: A tooty ta, a tooty ta, a tooty ta ta.
Thumbs up. (Stick up thumbs.)
Elbows back... (Bend elbows back.)
Feet apart... (Extend feet. Knees together... (Put knees together.)
Bottoms up... (Bend over and stick up bottom.) Tongue out... (Stick out tongue.)
Eyes shut... (Close eyes.) Turn around... (Turn around.)...

Granny at the Fair (Echo chant.)

My granny went
To the county fair.
And she bought
A rocking chair. (Begin rocking back and forth.)
And she rocked, and she rocked, and she rocked, and she rocked.

Cool Bear Hunt

Chorus: We're going on a bear hunt. (Slap thighs.)
We're going to catch a big one, (Spread hands far apart.)
With big green eyes, (Make circles by your eyes.)
And a fuzzy little tail. (Put hands on back and wiggle.)
Look over there. (Point index fingers.)
It's a candy factory.
Can't go over it. (Raise your arms up.)
Can't go under it. (Put your hands down by the floor.)
Can't go around it. (Make arms in a circle.)
Guess we'll go through it. (Pretend to stuff candy in your mouth.)
Yum, yum, yum, yummm. (Pat your tummy.)

Alligator

Alligator
Can be your friend, can be your friend, can be your friend, too!
The alligator is my friend
And he can be your friend, too!
If only you could understand
Don't wear him as a shoe.

Peanut Butter

Let Me See You Boogaloo

Scat the Cat – File Folder Story

Stories are a magical way to give children memories, nurture imaginations, and develop literacy skills! In addition to reading as many books as you can as often as you can, you'll enjoy telling these simple stories to your children. Don't be surprised when they say, "Do it again! Do it again!"

Directions: Cut the shape of a cat out of the front of a file folder. Cut construction paper into 8" x 10" rectangles and insert inside the file folder in this order: black, blue, red, yellow, green, black. Tape the sides of the file folder and decorate the front with markers if you desire.

Hint! Glue the words of the story below to the back of the file folder to help you tell it.

Once there was a little black cat. (Hold up the file folder showing the black cat.) He was a magic cat because he could change his colors (snap fingers) just like that. All he had to say was:

CHORUS: I'm Scat the Cat. I'm sassy and fat. (Children join on chorus.)
And I can change my colors (snap) just like that!

One day Scat decided he was tired of being black. He wanted to be a new color so he said: CHORUS. (Remove the black sheet of paper to make the cat blue.) And he changed blue! Scat went down to the pond to look at himself in the water. Unfortunately, he fell in and he couldn't swim. Timmy Turtle came along and helped Scat get back on shore.

Scat decided he didn't want to be blue any more, so he said: CHORUS. (Remove the blue sheet of paper to make the cat red.) And he changed red. He went walking down the street and everybody started laughing at him. "Whoever heard of a red cat!" they said.

Scat decided he didn't want to be red any more, so he said: CHORUS. (Remove the red sheet of paper to make the cat yellow.) And he changed yellow. Scat went walking in the woods and who did he run into but his cousin Leo the lion. "Grrrrr!" roared Leo. "I'm the only cat who can be yellow."

Scat decided he better not be yellow any more and he quickly said: CHORUS. (Remove the yellow sheet of paper to make the cat green.) Scat wanted to play with his brothers and sisters in the grass. He tried to play with them, but he was green like the grass and they couldn't see him.

Scat decided he didn't want to be blue, or red, or yellow, or green, so he said: CHORUS. (Remove the green sheet of paper to make the cat black.) Scat knew that being himself was the best thing to be. And do you know what? Being yourself is the best thing you can be, too. Because there's nobody else exactly like you. And I like you just the way you are!