THANK YOU FOR DOWNLOADING THIS FREE RESOURCE!

Printing Instructions:

Print back to back and fold in half like a brochure. Laminate for durability.
Printer settings vary. You may need to rotate a page to print correctly.

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ORAL LANGUAGE

WOULD YOU RATHER?

Ask questions that encourage children to explain their thinking.
For example: "Would you rather live in a house in the mountains or a house by the ocean? Why?" Encourage complete sentences and follow-up questions. Instead of accepting a one-word answer, ask, "Can you tell me more about that?"

DESCRIBE IT!

Choose something you see outside. Describe it without naming it. Your child guesses what it is. For example: "It is large, has four wheels, and carries things from one place to another." A truck!
For a challenge, let your child describe something for you to guess.

THE STORY CONTINUES

Start a story with one sentence. Each person adds another sentence.
For example: "One day, a little dog got into a big red truck..."
The next person might say: "He was on his way to visit his grandmother."
Encourage children to use descriptive words, connect their ideas, and keep the story going.

NAME THAT CATEGORY

Choose a category and take turns naming things that belong. Examples include:

- Animals
- Foods
- Things that fly
- Things that are round
- Things you find in a kitchen

For a challenge, ask children to explain why an item belongs in the category.

TELL ME MORE!

When your child notices something outside, use it as an opportunity to build language. For example: Child: "I see a big truck!" Parent: "What do you think it is carrying? Where do you think it is going? What might happen if it gets stuck?" These open-ended questions encourage children to use vocabulary, make predictions, and explain their thinking.

ARE WE THERE YET?

15 Screen-free games to play in the car
to build oral language, phonemic awareness,
and alphabet knowledge



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ALPHABET KNOWLEDGE

THE ALPHABET GAME

Start with the letter A and work your way through the alphabet. Look for words on signs, billboards, buildings, and vehicles that begin with each letter. When someone finds a word, they identify the letter, say its sound, and read the word if they can. For example:

- A: Auto (Auto Zone)
- B: Burger (Burger King)
- C: Corvette

For children who are just beginning to learn their letters, parents can identify the letter and say its sound together with the child. As children develop their reading skills, encourage them to read the entire word.

LICENSE PLATE LETTER HUNT

Look at the letters on license plates. Can your child find a particular letter? Can they tell you the sound it represents?

For a challenge, ask them to give you some words that begin with the letter-sound you are finding.

FIND THE WORD!

Choose a familiar word such as STOP, EXIT, or SPEED (on speed limit signs). See how many times your child can find the word during the ride. Talk about the letters, sounds, and meaning.

This is a wonderful opportunity to help children understand that print communicates meaning.

LETTER-SOUND HUNT

Choose a letter-sound. Everyone takes turns finding and object that begins with that letter. Children can name the object, identify the beginning sound, and describe it.

For example, if the letter is T, children might find a truck, a tree, or a traffic sign. As a challenge, children can find something that has the letter-sound anywhere in its name. For example, if the letter-sound is /t/ for T, they can find "Target" or "Wal-Mart" since the /t/ sound is in both of those names.

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

I SPY A SOUND

Instead of saying, "I spy something green," say, "I spy something that starts with /b/." Children listen for the sound and guess the object.
For example, /b/ might be a bus, building, or billboard.
Remember to say the sound itself rather than the letter name. For /b/, say the short sound, not "bee."

GUESS MY WORD

Say a word slowly, stretching out each sound. Children blend the sounds together to figure out the word. For example: /m/ /a/ /p/ "What word am I saying?" MAP! Start with simple two- and three-sound words. As children become more skilled, try longer words.

SOUND STRETCH

Pick a word and ask your child to stretch it out like a rubber band, saying each sound slowly. For example: SUN = /s/ /u/ /n/ Ask, "How many sounds do you hear in sun?" Children can count on their fingers or tap each sound.

RHYME TIME

Say a word and take turns thinking of words that rhyme. For example:
CAT, HAT, MAT, SAT. For an extra challenge, make up silly rhyming words. The goal is to hear and recognize the sound patterns, not necessarily to produce real words.

SOUND SWITCH

Say a word and ask your child to change one sound to make a new word.
For example: "Say cat. Now change /c/ to /h/. What word do you get?" HAT!
Begin with simple words and demonstrate as needed. As children become more comfortable, try changing the ending sound or middle vowel.

HOW MANY SOUNDS?

Say a word and ask your child to count the individual sounds they hear.
For example: FISH has three sounds: /f/ /i/ /sh/.
Children can count on their fingers or tap each sound.
This is a great way to help children understand that the number of sounds in a word is not always the same as the number of letters.