

RHYME TIME

Key Focus: Literacy

Observation: During music time, children are playing instruments and singing along to a song. The teacher stops the children and explains that she is going to choose a word from the song and ask for a rhyming word. She records the following responses:

<u>Song Word</u>	<u>Rhyme</u>	<u>Student</u>
Chair	Bear	Neil
Cat	Gato	Maria
Ball	Fall	Shayl
Mat	Bat	Ethan
Eat	Food	Suki
Tree	Arbol	Gabi
Pig	Sig	John

Reflecting on the Documentation: **Participants may quickly shift from reflecting on the documentation to interpreting the observation or suggesting strategies for extending learning. Remind participants to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of the documentation technique.*

Ask: How does capturing responses in a table-like format help you to observe children's strengths and weaknesses?

Sample Responses: By capturing responses in a structured way, it is easier to see patterns for the group and the individual. It is easy to calculate for the entire class how many children were able to provide at least one rhyme, which children did not, and the qualitative types of errors that the children who did not understand the concept are making.

Interpretation of the Observation: **Remind participants that in their interpretation they are looking for patterns, critical incidents, or errors. It is important to stick to the data.*

Ask: What do these responses tell you about children's rhyming skills as a group? As individuals?

Sample Responses:

- Three children provided a rhyming word and one child provided a nonsense rhyme.
- Two children confused rhyme with translation and one child thought the task was to complete a sentence or show association between an action and an object.

Relating Your Observation to the Child Outcomes Framework:

**Although participants can defend other interpretations, there should be general consensus that this observation demonstrates:*

2A3 (Literacy/ Phonological Awareness): Progresses in recognizing matching sounds and rhymes in familiar words, games, songs, stories, and poems.

1A4 (Language Development/ Listening and Understanding): For non-English-speaking children, progresses in listening to and understanding English.

Next steps for large group instruction:

**Help participants make connections between what they learn from the assessment and the next steps they want to take in instruction. If suggestions for instruction extend activities to new areas of learning, ask participants to consider what aspects of children's progress they would assess and how they would do so during those extension activities.*

Ask: What other activities can you do to promote rhyming?

** Responses will vary but might include:*

- Continue to work with the class on songs, poems, and rhyming books to strengthen their rhyming skills. Include books and songs that encourage children to create rhymes or that provide support for thinking of a rhyme (such as "The Hungry Thing" books by Jan Slepian and Ann Seidler, 2001).
- Create rhymes for names of children. Have the children decide which child's name rhymes with the nonsense word (or in some instances real words such as "hill, pill, mill" for Jill or Bill) that you say.
- Provide additional rhymes before asking for a rhyme for a new word. For example, chair, bear, care, mare, tear, hair. For those with difficulty rhyming, use the more common rhymes (such as -at, -in, -ing, -all).

Next steps for individualized instruction:

Ask: What would you recommend the teacher do next for individual children?

** Responses will vary but might include:*

- The children learning English seemed to be focused on the meaning of words rather than the sounds. For Gabi and Maria, work with them on rhymes in Spanish (for example, gato/pato, jugar/manejar) to help them solidify the notion that rhymes exist in the Spanish language as well. Then concentrate on rhymes in English. Help them to understand that rhyming is about sounds, not translation.
- You might group Suki and John together. Work with Suki on moving to where John is, in producing words that "sound alike" regardless of whether they are meaningful or not.

Additional Notes: Get families involved in your rhyming exercises. Send home a note to parents asking them to remember a nursery rhyme their parents told them when they were growing up—in whatever language they learned it. You can invite them into class to recite the rhymes and put together a book of rhymes from your classroom.

An alternative data collection tool would have the words across the top and the children’s names along the side so that the teacher is only writing a single word into the documentation tool for each child/word combination; this would allow more children to offer a rhyme for the same word. It would also mean that the teacher could keep the children’s names in the same order as the files, making it easier to locate information on a specific child. In addition, other patterns may become evident. Look for example, at Shayl’s responses in the chart below:

	Chair	Cat	Ball	Mat	Eat	Tree	Pig
Ethan				bat	heat		
Gabi						arbol	
John							sig
Maria		gato					
Neil	bear			cat			
Shayl		fat	fall		feet		fig
Suki					food		