A child’s phonological awareness is supported by a broad vocabulary (Dickinson, Golinkoff, & Hirsh-Pasek, 2010; Metsala, 1997). As children know and use their vocabularies, they have more opportunities to hear and recognize similarities between words. Poetry, chants, songs, and books written in rhyme or rhythm are wonderful ways for children to engage with a diverse range of words.

Children who are dual language learners are able to develop the ability to hear and recognize similar sounding words across their languages, whether the words have the same or completely different meanings.
Phonological Awareness meets Book Knowledge and Print Concepts

By reading books that play with language—highlighting the interesting sounds and musical flow of the words—teachers help children develop phonological awareness. Although experience with verse alone will not develop this skill, it is a critical and fun part of the process. All children benefit from being exposed to language in a way that is engaging and enjoyable.
Phonological Awareness meets Alphabet Knowledge and Early Writing

Even though phonological awareness is an oral language skill that is developed without reference to print, alphabet knowledge and early writing can support it. Research indicates that coupling phonological awareness instruction with writing is highly effective (Ball & Blachman, 1991; Ukrainetz et al., 2000).

Mrs. Denise wrote our popcorn poem on chart paper. We popped some popcorn and recited the poem while the popcorn popped!

My friends and I made little books by writing down the words of the poem, drawing pictures, and gluing pieces of popcorn and unpopped kernels on the paper.

POPCORN
Popcorn, popcorn, shake it in the bag. Close the lid tight and start to count. Make it hot, then eat it up!
Phonological Awareness meets Background Knowledge

Background knowledge is all of the information that children learn and store in their memories about themselves, other people, objects, and the world around them. This includes rhymes, poetry, songs, raps, and chants shared in a family and community. Teachers and caregivers can gather rhymes and songs from families and share them with the children. They can also invite family members to teach them to all of the children in the classroom.

“Knowledge begets knowledge. Everything that children read or hear is automatically interpreted relative to what they already know about similar subjects...children with rich knowledge bases are more successful at learning new information” (Pinkham, Kaefer, & Newman, 2012, p. ix).

When my teacher began to recite a new poem I recognized it as the *Itsy Bitsy Spider* song from the sound of it. I knew the words in my language.

Our parents taught Mrs. Denise how to say “Happy Birthday” in many languages. We learned too, and now when our friends have birthdays we wish them a “happy birthday” in all the languages we know!
Professional References


Children’s Book References
