

Disclaimer: Activities with children must always be risk assessed, including for allergies or choking. Children must always have adequate supervision. Resources and materials must always be appropriate for children's age and stage of development.

Top tips: Using nonsense words to support phonic awareness

Nonsense words are made up words that have no real meaning. There is lots of fun and learning that can be had using nonsense words as they provide playful opportunity for sounds and sound combinations.

Let's explore how you can use nonsense words in your setting to support children's developing phonic awareness.



1. Babbling is essentially strings of nonsense words. Encourage babies to produce different sound combinations by babbling and talking back to them
2. Toddlers often use nonsense words as their phonetic awareness develops, for example they may say 'gog' instead of 'dog'. Encourage toddlers' vocalisations and repeat back real words to them
3. Don't be concerned about using nonsense words with children – they will enjoy playing with sounds and silly words
4. Read books which introduce nonsense words such as 'woozles', 'wizzles' and 'heffalumps' in Winnie the Pooh by A.A. Milne or 'wondercrump', 'scrumdiddlyumptious' and 'swashboggling' in Roald Dahl books. Engage children in discussion about what they think the words were made up to mean
5. Engage children in nonsense word play games such as this week's MyNDNA nonsense word activity or encourage them to make up names for food or resources
6. Make up nonsense words yourself in role and fantasy play – the sillier the better – children will delight in identifying and hearing these words and will respond with wordplay.

NDNA products to support you with these tips

- [Literacy Champions](#)

And more resources at www.ndna.org.uk/hub/myndna