

From Snack Time to Story Time: Embedding Language Opportunities into Daily Home Routines

Brinley Richardson, B.S. (M.A. Candidate)

Tausha Edmonds, M.A. (M.Ed. Candidate)

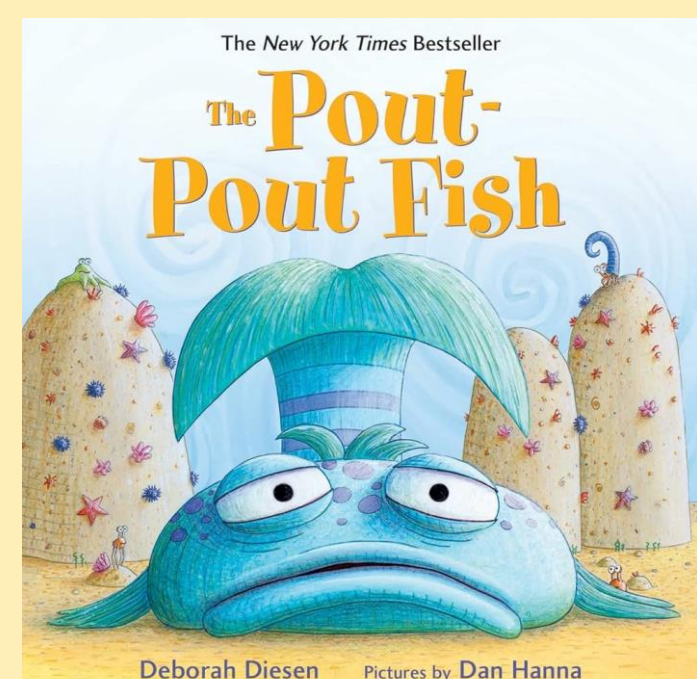
Ella Jones, B.S. (M.A. Candidate)

Lauri Nelson, Ph.D.

Literature becomes most powerful when stories leap off the page and into everyday life at home. By using simple listening and spoken language strategies during familiar routines—like snack time, story time, and play—parents can turn ordinary moments into rich opportunities for listening, language, and early literacy growth. When caregivers extend book themes into hands-on activities and meaningful conversation, they help strengthen vocabulary, phonological awareness, sequencing, and narrative skills, building a strong foundation for lifelong reading.

The Pout-Pout Fish

Target: Repetition



Story Time

- **Auditory Closure Strategy-** After reading the book a few times, have the child practice filling in the end of the repetitive lines to strengthen auditory memory.
- **Emotional Vocabulary-** As you read the book, pause when you get to an unfamiliar emotion word like 'gloomy.' Ask the child what they think it means, talk about the meaning, and have the child practice making the face. Repeating this each time you read the book will strengthen their semantic memory and build their vocabulary!

Snack Time



- Incorporate dramatic play at snack time with rainbow Goldfish! Pretend each fish is a character from The Pout-Pout Fish.
- Make one the pout-pout fish who repeats: "I'm a pout-pout fish with a pout-pout face, so I spread the dreary-wearies all over the place. Blub. Blub. Blub!"
- Have other fish share feelings using other emotional vocabulary from the book.

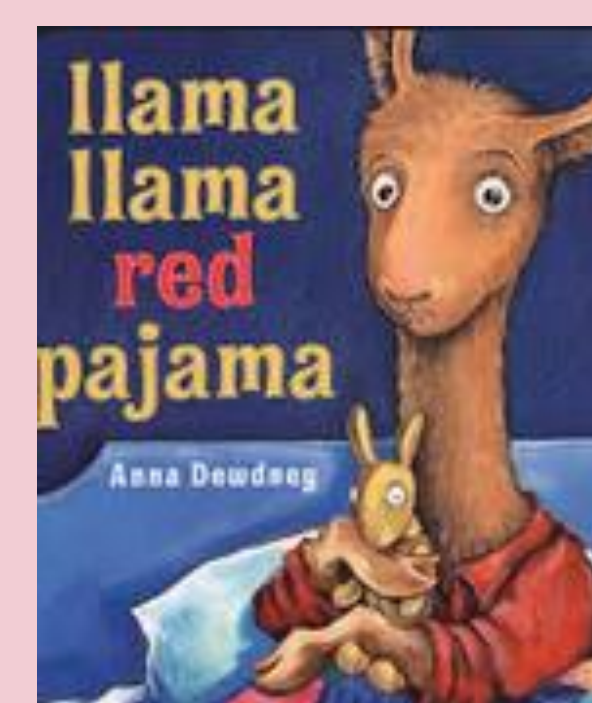
Play Time

- **Puppet Play: Repetition, Emotions & Auditory Memory-** Use socks, paper bags, or fish templates to make puppets of the pout-pout fish and friends. Act out key scenes with repetitive lines, switching roles to show emotions like gloomy, joyful, or happy. Let your child play freestyle to practice learned lines and build expressive vocabulary.



Llama Llama Red Pajama

Target: Phonological Awareness and Rhyming



Story Time

- **Acoustic Highlighting -** While reading the story, emphasize the rhyming words. For example, pajama... llama—they sound the same at the end.
- **Auditory Closure-** Once you have read through the book a few times and the child is familiar with the story, pause before the rhyming word and let the child fill it in.
- **Repetition-** Repeat rhyming pairs throughout the book to help the sound patterns stick.
- **Playful Sabotage-** Say a silly non-rhyming word pair on purpose ("pajama... banana!") and let your child catch your mistake.



Snack Time

- Clap the syllables of the snack name (crack-er, yo-gurt, pop-corn) while you eat.
- Point out the beginning sound in the snack word (/p/ popcorn, /m/ milk).
- Talk about words that rhyme with the snack (milk-silk, bread-head, cup-tup).

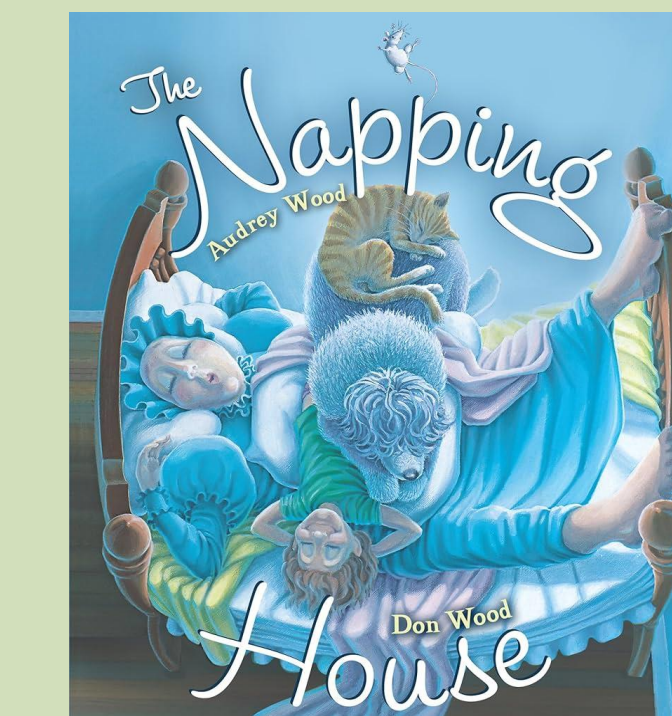
Play Time

- **Word Hunt: Rhyming-** Pick a snack word like *cheese*, *apple*, *pear*, or *grapes* and search the room together for objects that rhyme or almost rhyme, modeling playful pairs ("cheese... breeze," "pear... chair") and encouraging your child to generate their own matches to strengthen awareness of ending sounds and build early rhyming skills.



The Napping House

Target: Sequencing

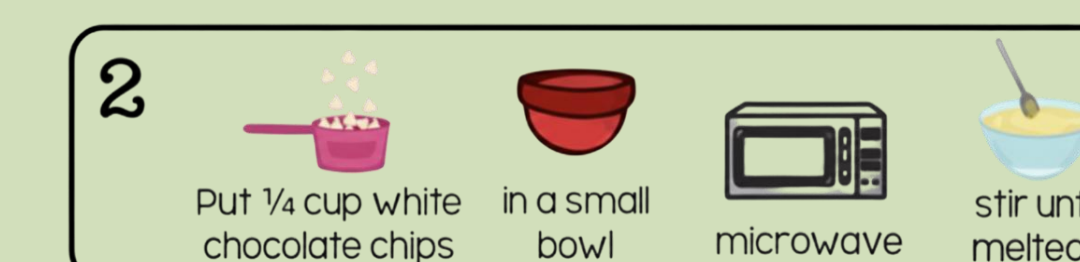


Story Time

- **Acoustic Highlighting:** While reading the story, emphasize the sequencing words. For example, first the grandma, second the child, and third the dog.
- **Auditory Closure:** After reading through the book a few times when the child is familiar with the story, pause and allow the child to fill in the blank for what is happening next. For example, first came the _____.
- **Auditory Bombardment:** Create multiple opportunities for your child to hear the target sequencing words.

Snack Time

- Instead of preparing snacks yourself, give your child a visual recipe to follow to help make the snack.
- While making a familiar snack, have your child tell you the steps in order. Mix up the steps sometimes so they can fix the sequence.
- Once the snack is made, have your child retell the steps of how they made the snack to another family member or a toy.



Play Time

- **Sleeping Pile: Sequencing-** Use stuffed animals to recreate the sleeping pile from the Napping House. Model sequencing language (first, second, third) as each character is added. Allow your child to knock down the pile, then restack the characters while reinforcing sequencing terms.

