

# **Rocket Phonics Big Movement/Preschool Games to Introduce the 36 Sounds and Blending**

## **Additional Games**

Note: Go to YouTube.com and type in Rocket Phonics to see how we introduce the sounds and play some games.

### ***Introduction***

If you have a preschool-age child, or a young child who likes to move, here is a variety of fun games to introduce the 36 sounds and begin blending 2-3 sounds.

You may find that your 3-4 year old loves to play these games, learns the sounds, and learns to blend 2-3 sounds, but isn't quite ready to begin reading words. That's okay – your child is very young! Just keep playing the variety of games here as well as the phonemic awareness games from Section 1.2 of the Rocket Phonics book, and, as your child progresses, begin playing the blending games given here and in your Rocket Phonics book.

#### **Notes:**

What makes these games especially fun for little kids is the imaginary play idea—going on a boat and going fishing, or on a bus to the zoo, or being on an island, etc. With each imaginary activity, we talk about who has ever done that activity, and what they see, hear, smell, touch, etc.

You can play with a whole class or with a small group of four or so. Decide what works best for your kids.

For safety's sake, for games including moving to the Big Letter sheets consider taping the Big Letter sheets to a wall in the room—or in the hallway. Put a piece of masking tape on the floor to mark where the child is to go.

Also, you may want to hold off teaching the *r* sound for now. This sound is difficult to say for most children this age, and since most of these activities involve simply hearing and saying the sounds, this may frustrate your child.

**Three Stages:** The games are in three stages:

#### **Stage 1 – Phonemic Awareness games and Introducing the Play & Read Sounds**

These games are especially helpful for very young children, especially those who may not yet know their letter shapes. Stage 1 games:

|   |           |
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2. Also, see the phonemic awareness games in Section 1.2 of the Rocket Phonics book
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**Stage 1 – Phonemic Awareness games**  
and Introducing the Play & Read Sounds

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# “Find it!” Rocket Phonics Phonemic Awareness Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to identify the sounds of English

Supplies:

For each sound, objects or pictures of objects around the house

How to Play:

1. Select the sound or sounds you want to use. As a phonemic awareness game your activity will be oral and auditory and will NOT include the Play & Read cards. You might introduce the sound /b/.
2. Say /b/ for *bee!* And *bug!* Give examples of other words that start with the /b/ sound, and ask children for words:

|            |             |             |            |             |            |
|------------|-------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|
| <i>bee</i> | <i>bag</i>  | <i>bite</i> | <i>bug</i> | <i>boy</i>  | <i>big</i> |
| <i>bat</i> | <i>bull</i> | <i>ball</i> | <i>Ben</i> | <i>belt</i> | <i>box</i> |

Here is another letter, *d*. Say /d/ for *dog!* And *dig!*

|             |            |             |             |             |             |             |
|-------------|------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| <i>dog</i>  | <i>dig</i> | <i>dime</i> | <i>deep</i> | <i>dock</i> | <i>dot</i>  | <i>damp</i> |
| <i>dead</i> | <i>dip</i> | <i>deer</i> | <i>duck</i> | <i>doll</i> | <i>dart</i> | <i>deaf</i> |

3. The game can simply be to call out a word that begins with the sound. Or you can ask your child to run and find things or pictures of things that start with that letter.
4. **I Spy Variation:** A popular traditional game to play while driving or walking around is I Spy. You can play this with the sound that begins each word, progressing through each consonant sound, vowel or digraph (see Play & Read Cards). Ex: *city* starts with the *s* sound.

So if you are in a room with a table and chair, you might say, “I spy something that starts with /t/. Can you find it?” The child answers, “Table.” Little ones might enjoy going to the object and touching it, and saying, “table.”

Next you could say, “I spy something that starts with /ch/. Can you find it?”

## Introducing the Rocket Phonics Play & Read Cards Letter Shapes and Sounds

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the letters' shapes and the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards with letter and picture

How to Play:

1. Starting with consonants, introduce 2-4 each lesson, reviewing at the start of each new lesson.
2. Show each card, say its sound and talk about the letter's shape.
3. For each card, with your bodies, you and your child make the shape of the picture/ actions described. As you do the action, say the sound. Details:

### **Green consonant cards:**

- f – like a flopping fish from above, with fins out and head flipping to the right; flap arms like fins, and look to right
- g\* – a person with palm cupped, getting a gift of a ball
- h – a long-necked horse (Oops! Look! The horse has no head!). Action: pretend to hold reins, slap hip and say, “/h/”
- j – side view of a jet heading straight up towards a star; stand tall, look up, arms straight down and slightly away from body
- k – tall-backed kangaroo, arms up and out, leg kicking forward
- l – lion, leaping straight up
- m – mom & child, two heads snuggling together/ mom gives us good stuff to eat (rub tummy –say, “mmm!”)
- n – upside down hummingbird nest! Cup 2 hands to make a nest
- p – pig's nose – push finger on nose
- r – rat, standing up, sniffing, before he runs; raise hands like paws
- s – 2 ends of s are where the sun's rays shine out; spread arms
- t –tiger standing upright, forelegs up and out, tail twitching. Instead of roaring, he says /t/!
- v –inside circle of van's steering wheel; grab it and go – vroom!
- w – like a wolf's ears, when he's pointing his face straight up, not howling—says /w/
- y – yak's lower face, beard to left – because he's yakking! Put hand below chin, and move mouth silently yakking; say /y/
- z – stripes on zebra run in zig-zag shape; make z with pointer finger on your belly

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\* **Note about g:** After doing these activities, I noted *g* was the only card the students persisted in calling the picture by a different name. They consistently said the picture was a *present*. So before introducing the cards, I might bring in a box, gift-wrapped with a bow, and perhaps some stickers for the kids in it.

I would start by saying, "Today I have a *gift* for you, children." And as I showed the box, I'd say, "here is your gift!" and give the stickers. Or just ask, "Do you like to get gifts?"

### Red vowel cards:

- **a** – the bowl of the **a** is like a round apple, and the top of the **a** is like a curving long stem. Pretend to hold the apple in your hand. Take a big bite!
- **e** – like an eggshell cracked open; pretend to tap an egg & crack it. What came out?
- **i** – like a man with an itch on his head; reach up and scratch your pretend itch
- **o** – the face of an otter peeking above water; rest head on your palms, arms out
- **u** – like the body of a duck swimming and splashing in the water; waddle & say /u/

### Blue **b, d** and consonant digraph cards:

- **b** – the body of a bumblebee, his stinger straight up. Wiggle body & rapidly flap arms!
- **ch** – chips in a bowl; cup left palm, reach with right hand & pick up chip. Is it salty?
- **d** – a friendly dog, tongue out, his tail straight up. Put 1 hand up like paw, wag the other hand beside your head, like a tail. Say /d/
- **sh** – a ship's top deck; the top of **h** is a smokestack. Ship's horn is loud; say /sh/ with finger to lips
- **th** – the tip of a finger dipping into a thimble (helps to show child a thimble & try it on)
- **th** – like a baby bathing; pretend to wash body
- **zh** – like the faces (facets) of jewels in treasure chest; look in with awe & say /zh/!

**Note:** The following cards I would introduce much later, after pretty much all the above, because so many of these sounds are spelled in so many different ways. The *oy* sound, though, is often spelled *oy*, and is the first vowel digraph I introduced.

### Pink vowel digraph cards:

- **ay** – like an ape holding an apple, pretend to be an ape, but say /ay/!
- **ea** – like the eye and cheek of a majestic eagle; fly & soar, arms straight out
- **ie** – like a man with a tie and a pocket on his shirt; straighten your tie
- **oa** – like a goat's body, ready to butt! Put fingers by forehead for horns and move head to butt. Then say /oa/! as if you were butted!
- **oo** – like two cookies on a platter. Hold left hand out flat. Touch each, then pick one up, bite it & say /oo/
- **ou** – like the ankle and ball of someone's foot; hold out foot, rotate ankle and say /ou/
- **ow** – like the splotches on a gentle black & white cow; look peaceful & chew cud slowly
- **oy** – like a doll in a dress, holding a ball; pretend to be a doll; say /oy/

## **Be the *Shapes* Rocket Phonics Play & Read Card Game** – a pre-writing activity as well!

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the letters' shapes and the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards with letter and picture

Big Letter Sheets, laminated

How to Play:

1. Starting with consonants, introduce 2-4 each lesson, reviewing at the start of each new lesson.
2. Show each card, say its sound and talk about the letter's shape.
3. For each card, with your bodies, you and your child make the shape of the letter. As you do the action, say the sound. For example, for *s*, you try to curve your whole body into the *s* shape. You may want to lie down to do these!

Variations:

1. Guess the shape: take turns forming a letter and have the other players guess the letter you are making. Say its sound.
2. Hopscotch: lay out the big letter sheets and beside each, put a piece of masking tape. When you say the sound, child jumps on piece of tape. With your body, try making the shape of the letter on which you land. Say the sound.
3. Hold up a letter or a two-letter (digraph) card. Hold it in the air, a few inches above your student's head, and perhaps two feet in front of him. Ask him to "trace" the letter's shape, in the air, with his nose. The more he moves his body the better. Say the sound.

### **Just for fun: Dead bugs end to game:**

At the end, you might ask, "Did this game wear you out? I am so tired I could drop!" And lead the children to slide to the floor, first legs, torso, then head. Have them all look around at the group at how silly we all look. Like dead bugs! All stick arms and legs straight up in the air, and look around at each again.

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# **Be the *Sounds* Rocket Phonics Play & Read Card Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the letters' shapes and the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards with letter and picture -- pairs of each of 4 sounds

How to Play:

1. At the start of each new lesson, review 2-4 sounds: Show each card, say its sound and talk about the letter's shape.
2. As you say each card and sound, with your bodies, you and each child make the shape of the picture/actions described.
3. Place the 4 pairs face down. Give each child a turn to pick a card. Can he show the group the action of the letter? Can he show the sound? Help as needed until all cards are practiced. Using pairs simply allows review.



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# “Hurry, Horse!” or Find the Match Rocket Phonics Play & Read Card Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Pairs of Rocket Phonics Play & Read Cards

Furniture or tape to mark off starting and ending points

Kitchen timer (opt)

How to Play:

1. Split 3-4 pairs of cards, placing cards, one of each pair, face-down at starting point, and remaining cards face-up, at opposite end of room, or at least 5' apart (ending point).
2. Each card has an action associated with it. (See below)
3. Each player takes turns: Player starts at starting point: he takes a card from a face-down stack or pile and says its sound. He takes the card with him.
4. Then he does the action to move across to the card's mate.
5. At ending point, from the face up cards, players pick the mate to their card.
6. Each player says the sound of his matched cards and gives the pair to leader at ending point. If sound isn't right or cards don't match, leader helps player make a match and say correct sound. Then player goes back to starting point.
7. (4 players can split into 2 teams or 1 team can race to beat a timer.)

Actions:

f – flop, fish

g – get gift

h – hurry, horse

j – jet towards star, arms near sides

k – kick, kangaroo

l – leap, lion

m – mom snuggle/rub tummy (mmm!)

n – nest (bowl w 2 hands)

p – push pig snout, snort

r – run, rat w paws up

s – shine, sun (arms out)

t – twitch tail, tiger

v – vroom, steer van!

w – howl, wolf (nose up, ears down)

y – yak, yak (talking motions)

z – zigzag, zebra (run in z shape)

Note: Variations on placing cards

1. Put match to cards together on table or area across room. Kids need to study cards to pick out their match.
2. Show children as you put the matching cards in various places around the room. Children close eyes, hold out hand and you give them a card. When

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you say, "Go!" they then all run together to find the match to their card.  
Encourage them to help each other.

3. We show the actions for the consonants. They are simply an extension of the description given in Introducing the Letter Shapes and Sounds, above.

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## Letter Leap

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

For each child in the game have 1 of each Play & Read Card being learned (4-8 cards recommended)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Optional)

How to Play:

1. For extra fun, you might pretend to be on a mountain on top of a tall rock, ready to leap to another rock. Put your hand above your eyes as a shield against the bright sun as you peer at the view. See the eagle soaring? Wow! You are high up!
2. Using Play & Read Cards, review vowels and consonants you will use to play. For example, you might select from short vowels *a, e, i, o, u* and consonants, *p, t, m, n, and f*.
3. Lay out in a big circle 4-8 different Big Letters to match the Play & Read Cards you will use. Put a piece of masking tape on the floor beside each Big Letter sheet. Make one circle per child. If more than one child is playing, their circles can use different letters or be the same (you will need to print duplicates as needed).
4. Each child can stand inside a circle of letters. Show the children a Play & Read Card that matches one of the big letters. They say the sound, and leap to that letter. You can help them as needed to recall the sound.
5. Repeat. How far can they leap? How fast can they get to all the Big Letters?
6. To simplify, if playing with more than one child, just have all the children in the middle of the circle and have them take turns. Can they hop on one foot when they get on the tape? How fast can the whole group complete all the selected sounds?

## Letter Train

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

For each child in group have 1 of each Play & Read Card being learned (4-8 cards recommended)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Optional)

How to Play:

1. Lay out across the room whatever number of Big Letters you want to use. Put a piece of masking tape on the floor beside each Big Letter.
2. The object is to go from first to last, and child is to say each letter's sound to go to the next letter. You can show the matching Play & Read Card to start each move, lay the Play & Read Card beside the Big Letter, or child can say the sound independently.
3. Each child can have his or her own train of same or different sounds.
4. If a child misses a sound, before he moves ahead:
  - a. You could have him hop in place 3 times or sing a song
  - b. Show Play & Read Card and help him remember the sound
5. Variation: Children can see how quickly they finish the train; children can take turns and race (either individually or cooperatively for a group time).

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# **Finders-Keepers Hunt**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Purpose: to learn to hear the sounds in words and learn the shapes

Supplies:

For each child in group have 1 or more of each Play & Read Card being learned (4-8 cards recommended)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Optional)

How to Play:

1. Place around the room the Big Letters sheets you are using.
2. Give child a Play & Read Card to match one of the Big Letter sheets.
3. When he finds the match he returns it to you. If he can say the sound of the letter, he "wins" that Play & Read Card.
4. He can exchange for a sticker, coin or other prize each card he wins, if you like.

**Match It!** This game has several variations.

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

What these games teach: letter shapes, sounds, vocabulary, grouping

Supplies:

Pictures (from magazines, computer, children's books, etc.) or objects around the home

Play & Read Cards with letter and picture

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Optional)

How to Play Variation 1: **Match It 1!**

1. Lay out several pictures, especially of objects your child enjoys (animals, toys, food)
2. Talk about what these are pictures of (tiger, wagon, block, pretzels, etc.)
3. Talk about different words for a picture (block =toy=cube, etc.)
4. Bring out 3 or 4 Big Letter sheets your child is learning
5. Ask child to match each Big Letter sheet to a picture that begins with that sound

How to Play Variation 2: **Match It Big Letter Bingo!**

1. Lay out, in 1 to 3 rows of 3, three to nine Big Letter sheets your child is learning
2. Bring out several pictures, especially of objects your child enjoys (animals, toys, food)
3. Talk about what these are pictures of (tiger, wagon, pretzels, etc.)
4. Ask child to match picture to a sheet whose letter has the first sound of the object in the picture (ex: picture of *bat* on *b*; of *dog* on *d*; and *hat* on *h*)
5. Child tries to find pictures to make a bingo, either in a line or coverall

How to Play Variation 3: **Match It Surprises!**

1. Lay out 3 or 4 Big Letter sheets your child is learning
2. Put objects in a bag (a variety of objects like comb, toothbrush, gum, block, feather)
3. Ask child to guess what is in the bag
4. Child removes one object from bag. Ask what sound does that object start with.

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5. Child matches object to Big Letter sheet (*feather* on *f*; *comb* on *k*)
6. Another variation is to have child place Big Letter sheet on objects around the home, such as *t* on *table*, *l* on or beside *lamp*, etc.

All these variations can be played using Play & Read Cards instead of objects—but preschoolers like objects!

### **Big Letter Match Game steps and variations:**

1. Show child the Play & Read Card, have him say the sound, and then go hunt for the matching Big Letter sheet you have placed or hidden elsewhere.
2. He can take the Play & Read Card with him to make sure he matches the correct letter. It will help him pay attention to and remember the details of the letter's shapes.
3. And you could place the Big Letter sheet on or near an object that has that sound--t on the television, for example and ch on the chair.
4. You can put several Big Letter sheets near each other so he has to discriminate between them, like p, t, f and g, for example. You can make it harder or easier.
5. With poster board, a whiteboard laid flat, or tri-fold board (even larger) you can tape out a grid of boxes for him to fill in with the Big Letter sheets so he can lay them in the grid and complete the game like Bingo.
6. As he takes off the Big Letter sheets to put them away he again says the sound. He can look at the Play & Read Card but the goal is to learn to say the sound from the Big Letter sheet.

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## **Stage 2 – Learning and Reviewing the Sounds**



## **“Whack the Sound!” Rocket Phonics Play & Read Card Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Singles of Rocket Phonics Play & Read Cards

One or more fly swatters (new is really best) (I found neon-colored plastic ones at Wal-mart)

How to Play: (for 1)

1. Show child fly swatters. Can child identify each one's color? Show child what a fly swatter is, and whack imaginary bugs on the table. Show child you can wave hello with the swatter, give high, low, and sideways high 5's, and fan yourselves if you get warm. Ask child to select the swatter he wants to use, and pick one for yourself. Put both aside for later.
2. Introduce or review the sounds of the cards you will use.
3. Set out 2-3 cards. Show child that you will say a sound and have him whack that sound. Demonstrate.
4. Depending on child's development, you can either just say the sound (fff) or say “fff as in fish” to help the child find the correct card.
5. Give lots of praise: “Good! You're doing great! You really know your sounds! Give me high five! Low five!” If child whacks wrong card, try just saying sound again and pointing to correct card with your swatter or finger.
6. When you're done, let the child know he did terrific.

How to Play: (for 2-4)

1. For this variation, just give each child a fly swatter
2. Spread the children apart, so they will not be tempted to swat anything but the cards!
3. Set out the cards away from the children so they need to move to the card to swat it as each takes a turn

## **“Bowling!” Rocket Phonics Play & Read Card Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Singles of Rocket Phonics Play & Read Cards

10 empty, clean soda cans (I like to remove the tab and place mailing tape over the opening so there are no sharp edges

Ball – tennis ball or other light, soft ball

How to Play:

1. Introduce cans and ball to children. (You can, for example, put them in a semi-opaque shopping bag and ask the children to guess what is in the bag. While bag is still closed, let each child hold bag and guess if the cans are empty or full.)
2. Ask children to raise hand if they've ever been bowling. What do you do with the ball? (Roll it) What do you want the ball to do? (Knock down the pins – or cans)
3. Review or introduce the cards you will use. Explain child will pick a card and say its sound to get a turn to bowl.
4. Place cards in a pile, face-down, on floor.
5. Let kids help you set up the 10 cans in a triangle on the floor about 10 feet or so from where kids will take turns.
6. First to go could be the first child to sit on the rug, ready to start.
7. Child picks a card, shows it to all the kids and says the sound. Also, they can all say the sound and can do any action associated with the sound.
8. First child rolls ball to knock down cans. Cheer for each player.
9. If child misses, he can roll again – just pick another card and say the sound.
10. After child has knocked down one or more cans, child runs and gets the ball and gives it to next child. Applaud child who just finished turn.
11. Repeat as desired. Some children will want to set up the cans they just knocked down. After all cans are down, let kids go re-set the cans. They will set them haphazardly – this is fine!

Variations:

You can include one larger can, like an energy drink can, as a prize can.

Whoever knocks that can down gets a reward – a sticker, a chance to be leader, or an extra turn.

## “Going Fishing” Rocket Phonics Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards being learned, in pairs, plus extra cards

Strainer for fish tank, 1-2

Blue pillowcase or cloth

Personal fan/mister (opt)

Goldfish crackers for after game (opt)

Kitchen timer (opt)

How to Play:

1. Players, as a group, are given 2-3 cards to try to match. For example, *f, g, h*.
2. The matches, plus extra pairs, like *r, s, t*, are on the floor under the cloth.
3. Player 1 begins fishing by holding strainer out and down, so it can fit under the cloth on the floor.
4. Leader and any additional players slightly lift the cloth so player 1 can put strainer under cloth.
5. Without looking, leader or any extra player puts one card into the strainer.
6. Player 1 shows the card to all the players, who all say the sound. If the card matches one of the group's cards, Player 1 makes the match.
7. If it's not the card he fished for, he places it beside the other cards needing a match.
8. To move quickly, each player gets one chance to make a match.
9. On a hot day, each time a match is made, leader could reward the players by misting them from a personal fan/mister. (“Look far out over the ocean. See the big wave coming? Here comes the breeze! Here comes the ocean spray!”)
10. Next fisher takes a turn, whether or not first fisher made a match.
11. When all cards have been matched, everyone celebrates by getting misted. And all players can munch Goldfish crackers!

Goal is for all players to match each of their cards.

Option: Group can try to beat timer or other group

Variation: use the stick with a string tied to it like a fishing pole, clothespin tied to end of string, in place of strainer.

## **“Balls in Bucket” Rocket Phonics Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards being learned, (no more than 4 new sounds), plus  
extras that are review

6-8 soft, small balls (vinyl squirt balls, unfilled, work well)

2 buckets (leave one empty; put all the balls in the other bucket)

Personal fan/mister (opt)

Kitchen timer (opt)

How to Play:

1. Place the empty bucket a few feet away from the edge of an area rug where kids will sit or stand to play.
2. Place the bucket with balls on the area rug or area where kids will play.
3. Introduce the new sounds (up to 4) using the Play & Read Cards
4. Stack the cards in a deck, along with any extras you want to review
5. Each player gets a turn by selecting a card from the stack and saying its sound, and showing it to other players so all say the sound
6. Player selects a ball and tosses it, trying to get it in the bucket.
7. Each player can get one try or more, and if he misses, he gets the ball and puts it in the bucket where the balls are waiting to be tossed.
8. Celebrate each toss with high fives and applause.

Option:

1. Kids can try to get all the balls into the bucket to beat the timer.
2. Throughout the game, because it was a hot day, I would turn on the personal fan, and fan and/or mist the kids.

## “Balloons in Bucket” Rocket Phonics Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Length of lesson: no more than 15-20 minutes

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards being learned, (no more than 4 new sounds), plus  
extras that are review

40-50 small balloons filled with air (not too full, so they don't pop too easily)

Big vinyl tub (the kind for soda cans and ice works well). Put balloons in tub.

Personal fan/mister (opt)

Kitchen timer (opt)

How to Play: **Note:** you will see there is little connection between the cards and this game activity. I just decided to use the cards sort of as a ticket into the game, so once they said the sounds, the group could then do this fun and wild activity.

1. To set the stage, you can pretend the section of room or area rug you are on is an island. Talk about what an island is, feel the floor (“water”) around the island (“Brr! It’s cold!” Shake hands in air to shake off “water”).
2. Talk about the palm trees on the island, the sand, and maybe a volcano in the distance. (What’s a volcano? Listen to hear if it’s rumbling, a clue that it could erupt. Nope. It’s quiet today. )
3. Introduce the new letters being learned. Then place the cards face-down in a pile and ask each player to pick a card, show it to everyone, and all say the sound. The card is your ticket to play.
4. Everyone “look” far out into the ocean and notice that a ship has wrecked and look for supplies that you can collect and put in our tub.
5. While the players wait, shake the balloons out of the tub all over the area in which you want players to play.
6. Explain to players that in a moment they can “swim” out to the supplies (balloons), and try to pick up as many as they can at once. Ask players how many they think they can pick up at one time.
7. Say “Go!” and players race around the room, trying to pick up an armload of balloons. They are so cute as the balloons spill out of their arms, and they try to hold an extra balloon between their legs and still walk over to the tub!
8. Once they drop off their first load of balloons they go back for more until all the balloons are in the tub. They will want to play this again and again. Each time they need a ticket—they need to say the sound on a Play & Read Card.
9. During the game, on a hot day, we look far out over the ocean (hand shielding eyes to look) to see the big wave coming and feel the ocean breeze. Then I might turn on a personal fan, and mist the kids.

## **“Tongs A Lot” Rocket Phonics Cooking Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 - 5

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes

Supplies:

For each child in group have up to 10 of each card being learned

Tongs 1 pair

Chef's hat and apron (opt)

Large plastic or metal bowl

Kitchen timer

How to Play:

1. In large plastic or metal bowl put 1 of each card being learned for each child. For example, for 4 kids, you'd start with 12 cards in the bowl. If the kids were learning *w*, *v* and *f*, you'd have 4 of each of those three.
2. Leave a demo set of cards showing so kids know which letters they are to get.
3. Using only the tongs, children take turns reaching in bowl to pull out one of each card.
4. After each child pulls out his set of 3, put the cards back into the bowl. This way the challenge is the same for all.
5. Child is to say the sound each letter makes before he has his turn to pull out the cards, and to say the sound of the letter he pulls out.
6. Game ends when each child in the group has gotten one of each of the three cards.
7. (Option): Group tries to beat the kitchen timer
8. Note: younger children may need to use a hand to help put a card into the tongs, but all ages will like using the tongs!

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**Stage 3 games: Blending games**

## “Reading Bingo” Rocket Phonics Blending Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 - 5

Purpose: to learn to blend the sounds

Supplies:

12 Play & Read consonant cards

2 or more Play & Read vowel cards

12 Laminated Big Letter sheets of consonants to match selected Play & Read Cards

2 or more Laminated Big Letter sheets of vowels to match selected vowel Play & Read Cards

How to Play:

1. Review consonants you'll use and any vowels already introduced as needed.
2. Do the Follow The Finger Blending Game from Rocket Phonics pg. 26. Show children that as they blend the sounds, like /a/ and /t/, they are reading! First use the Play & Read Cards, and then use the large sheets with a letter on them.
3. Lay out 10 sheets of consonants on a table or floor, so they are like a big bingo board, with two rows of five.
4. Place 12 matching consonant Play & Read Cards in a stack by the children. Have ready two or more vowels child has been learning.
5. In turn, each child selects a vowel and a consonant, such as *a* and *n*, or *e* and *m*.
6. Child blends the two sounds together. Talk about if the blend is a word or word part. For example, *an* is both a word *and* a word part, as in *and* or *ant*. *Em* is a word, too, although not a common word. Also, it is a word part, as in *hem*, or *them*.
7. After child blends a consonant, he places that Play & Read Card on top of the same letter on the Big Letter Sheet. When all the letters are covered, the children have made a cover-all bingo, and they can shout bingo and celebrate.

Option:

Try holding up the sheet letters and having child blend two of those instead of two Play & Read Cards. You could do the bingo in reverse and place the large sheet letter over the smaller Play & Read Card.



## **“Going Shopping” Rocket Phonics Reading Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1 or more

Purpose: to learn the sounds each letter makes, and blend two sounds together

### Supplies:

For each child in group have 1 of each Play & Read Card being learned

Matching laminated large letters, 1 of each letter being learned

Free-standing Shopping bag, preferably one with handles

Stickers or other reward

Kitchen timer (opt)

### How to Play:

1. Explain to children that we are going shopping. In chairs or on floor, all pretend to drive to the store. If you like, you can pretend other drivers are driving crazy, so you have to swerve, brake, go fast – whatever is fun.
2. As you drive, explain that the store is closing so they are having a big clearance sale, and when all the merchandise is gone, they are giving prizes to all the shoppers. “Do you like prizes? Good! Me, too!”
3. Put a stack of Play & Read Cards being learned (or a stack of consonants and a stack of vowels) face down near players. Place the matching big letters right side up on an area nearby, table, counter or floor. Place the shopping bag near you.
4. One at a time, have a “shopper” pick up his shopping list (a card from each stack, or two cards from a consonant stack). Ask him to blend the vowel and consonant together. (It’s easier to say the vowel first and then the consonant, so *e* and *d* would be *ed*, as in *bed*, *led*, *shed*; and *e* and *t* would be *et*, as in *wet*, *bet*, *set*.) Have all the children say each blend.
5. One at a time, have the shopper go find the items on his “list.” So if he picks the *e* and *d* Play & Read Cards, he would get the *e* and *d* big laminated letters. He shows the matched letters to you and the children, all blend the sounds, and he puts them in the bag.
6. When all the letters are matched, the store is empty and gives out prizes (like a sticker) to each “shopper.”
7. (Option) you may try setting a kitchen timer, especially for older children, who can try to get all the “shopping” done before the store closes.

Easier Variation: You can use this game as a matching activity to just match one Play & Read Card sound with the larger letter card.

## **“Hansel and Gretel” Rocket Phonics Phonemic Awareness, Blending and Reading Game**

For ages 3-5

Number of Players 1-5

Purpose: learn to hear sounds in words, blend the sounds, and read CVC words

(**Note:** words may be divided into two parts, *onset* (the first sound) and *rime* (the end sound or sounds. Researchers have identified the 37 rimes most helpful to learn and practice reading. These are in our Rocket Phonics kit. )

Supplies:

Have 1 of each Play & Read Card being learned to spell one or two end rimes, such as *et*, *op* or *at*, plus consonants to form words with either rime: ex – *b*, *f*, *h*, *l*, *m*, *p*, *r*, *s*, *t*, *v*, *ch*, *sh*

Laminated Big Letter sheets with one letter or digraph per sheet to match selected Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Opt) in bucket or house-like box (ring pops, sticky hands, stickers etc.)

Select one or two end rimes, to show one at a time. Ex: *at*, or *op*. Select consonant or consonant digraph at beginning to form words. Ex:

*at*: *b*, *f*, *h*, *p*, *m*, *r*, *s*, *t*, *v*, *ch* = *bat fat hat pat mat etc.*

*op*: *b*, *f*, *h*, *l*, *m*, *p*, *t*, *ch*, *sh*

*in*: *b*, *d*, *f*, *k*, *p*, *s*, *t*, *w*, *ch*, *sh*, *th*

How to Play:

1. For extra fun, sit together on floor and pretend to be Hansel and Gretel. Review Hansel and Gretel story. We are going for a walk in the forest. What do you see? Squirrels? Foxes, birds, a deer? Bushes, a stream? (Stick a toe in the stream—is it cold or just right? Is it cold or warm out? Sunny? Windy?)
2. Review the Play & Read Cards that create one or two end rimes like the examples above, like *at* and *op*. Show that if you add a Play & Read Card before the rime, like *h*, you make a word, like *hat* or *hop*.
3. To review, match Play & Read Card consonants and consonant digraphs to large letter sheets, using about twice as many letters as you have children.
4. Place Play & Read Card consonants and consonant digraphs in a path on floor leading to a bucket or box on the far side of the room.
5. For a turn each child selects a Big Letter Sheet consonant or consonant digraph from pile on floor and makes a word with the end rime. Then child takes that sheet and places it on the matching Play & Read Card on the path.
6. When all the cards have been matched, lead the kids in walking on the laminated sheets to the bucket, where they get their prize.

## “Reading Bingo 2” Rocket Phonics Phonemic Awareness and Blending Game

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1-5

Purpose: to learn to hear the sounds in words and blend the sounds

Supplies:

For each child in group have 1 of each card being learned (5 vowels, 5 consonants)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Prizes (Optional)

How to Play:

1. For extra fun, sit together on chair or on floor and each pretend to get in his or her car, buckle up, start car and drive to bingo parlor. (Show imaginary license: say, “I look pretty good!”) Pretend to walk into hall and look around, seeing all your friends. Wave and say hi! Finally, pretend to sit at your table.
2. Using Play & Read Cards, review vowels and consonants you will use to play. For example, you might use short vowels *a, e, i, o, u* and consonants, *p, t, m, n,* and *f*.
3. On a large surface nearby, place the Big Letter sheets to match.
4. Spread Play & Read Card vowels out in one group, face up and consonants in a group nearby, face up.
5. For extra fun, leader pretends to be bingo announcer, announcing final bingo game for the day, a coverall. If you like, you might want to announce for this special game there will be a prize for all those who play this game. (We used high-bounce balls, one for each child)
6. For each turn, announcer says a two-sound word (or end rime). Player tries to find first the correct vowel, and then consonant. You might use:

|                |    |
|----------------|----|
| it             | if |
| am             | up |
| ot (as in pot) | eg |

For example, leader says, “am,” then slightly separates the two sounds: “aaa...mmm.” For some players you may need to say “aaa as in apple, and mmm as in mom.”

7. Player selects the Play & Read Cards (a and m, in this case) and takes them to the large letter sheets to match there.
8. When all letters are matched, all players shout “Bingo!” Prize is optional.

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## **“Which Is It? and Oh, No – The Animals Escaped!” Rocket Phonics Phonemic Awareness and Blending Game**

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1-5

Purpose: to learn to hear the sounds in words and blend the sounds

Supplies:

For each child in group have 2 of each card being learned (up to 5 vowels, 5 consonants or so)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, with one letter or digraph per sheet to match smaller Play & Read Cards

Small vinyl zoo animals

Bucket to hold animals

Prizes – this could be one or more zoo animal to keep (Optional)

How to Play:

1. Scatter or hide small vinyl zoo animals around the room before starting.
2. For extra fun, start the game by pretending to drive to the zoo. Have you ever been to the zoo? What did you see, hear, smell, touch? What animals will you see at the zoo? Pretend to be some of those animals.
3. In this game, the process of selecting the correct vowel and consonant sounds (see next steps) is our “training” to be zoo workers.
4. Make a stack of up to 5 different Play & Read Cards vowels and another stack of 5 consonants. Or you may use 5 vowel and 5 consonant Big Letter Sheets.
5. Place two sets of a vowel and consonant before first child. For example, *e* and *n* (as in *men*), *e* and *t* (as in *wet*), or *a* and *p* (as in *nap*), and so on. You may use either the Play and Read Cards or the Big Letter laminated sheets.
6. Ask child which of the two sets is the *en* sound as in *men*.
7. If child needs help, help as needed to make the correct choice.
8. When all children have identified the correct word or end rime, they get to go find and return an animal to the “zoo” or bucket.
9. Keep taking turns until all the animals are returned to the zoo.

## Blending Variation: For Letter Leap or Letter Train

For ages 2-5

Number of Players 1-4

Purpose: to learn to hear the sounds in words and blend the sounds

Supplies:

Play & Read Cards being learned (up to 4 vowels, and 4 consonants)

Big Letter Sheets, laminated, to match selected Play & Read Cards

Prizes Optional

How to Play:

1. Using Play & Read Cards, review vowels and consonants you will use to play. Select from short vowels *a, e, i, o, u* and, for example, consonants, *p, t, m, n,* and *f*.
2. Lay out on the floor the Big Letters to match the Play & Read Cards you will use. Make one pair per child. Put the Big Letter sheet vowels in one row and the Big Letter sheet consonants in a second row. Place a piece of masking tape on the floor by each Big Letter sheet.
3. Show two Play & Read Cards or Big Letters and say or have child say the two sounds, such as:  
    */a/ and /t/ or*  
    */o/ and /n/*
4. Child leaps to each letter in turn, saying the sounds (blending them) before he leaps or as he leaps.
5. Repeat. How far can they leap? How fast can they get to all the Big Letters? How fast can the group end up on the selected consonant sheets?

**Note:** The sounds you choose to practice blending do not need to make words – they will probably be parts of words, though. You can use */e/ and /b/* as in *web*, for example, or */e/ and /n/* as in *when*. A variation is to see if your child can tell you if a word you say has that blend in it.

This is a nice step to get ready to read words on the page!