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**Using Bananagrams to Help
Your Buddy Become a Better Reader**

***Bananagrams is a fun game, but did you know it’s also a really good tool for helping students with phonics and reading strategies? Here are a few games you can play with the Bananagrams tiles to help your student become a better reader!***

**Letter Swap**

* Begin by building a one-syllable word that your student knows, such as *cat*.
* Have your student read the word, and point to each letter as they read it.
* Then say: *I want to change the word* cat *to cap.* What letter do I need to change? (*t* to *p*).
* Have the student build the word *cap.*
* Have the student continue to build new words by swapping out letters.
* **NOTE:** Swapping beginning and ending consonants is easier than swapping out middle vowels. If your student is reading at a very low level, stick to swapping consonants. However, if your student needs specific work with short vowels, asking students to build *cat -> cut -> cot* is good practice!

**Word Families**

**Word families** are words that end with the same common pattern and sound. Words in the same word family will rhyme. The most common word families in the English language are: *ack, ain, ake, ale, all, ame, an, ank, ap, ash, at, ate, aw, ay, eat, ell, est, ice, ick, ide, ight, ill, in, ine, ing, ink, ip, it, ock, oke, op, ore, ot, uck, ug, ump, unk.*

* Begin this game by building a word from one of the word families above. For example, build the word *cake.*
* Have the student read the word: *cake.*
* Ask the student to build the word *bake,* by swapping the *c* for a *b.* Read the word together.
* Then ask: *What other words do you know that rhyme with* cake *and* bake*?* Cake and bake are both in the -*ake* word family. Let’s build as many -*ake* words as we can!
* Have students continue to swap out the first letter to build as many –*ake* words as possible. (*bake, cake, fake, Jake, lake, make, quake, rake, sake, take, wake, Blake, stake, brake, etc.)*
* Continue the game with another word family.

**Silent *e* Game - VCe Patterns (Long and Short Vowel Sounds)**

If your student is struggling with the “Silent *e*” on VCe words (words like *cake, like, cute,* etc.) try this game!

* Build a 3-letter CVC (Consonant-Vowel-Consonant) word such as the following: *cut, rat, cub*, *tap,* etc.
* Have the student read the word, pointing to each letter as it’s read. Make sure the student correctly reads the short vowel sound.
* Then add an *e* at the end of the word. For example, *cut* becomes *cute.*
* Have the student read the new word aloud. Discuss how adding the *e* at the end makes the *u* a long u. (Or, the silent *e* makes the *u* say its name.)
* Continue practicing with other words.
* Play it in reverse! Start with some long vowel CV*e* words, take the *e* away, and have the student read the short vowel word.
* **NOTE:** **Nonsense words are okay!!!** It’s okay to have students read words that aren’t real words – as long as it follows the rule. For example, you can build the word *tab*, add the silent *e,* and make the word *tabe. Tabe* isn’t really a word, but if students see this word and understand the silent e, they should be able to read the nonsense word correctly.