



# Old MacDonald Had a Farm

Skill: Blending

<u>What you need</u>	<u>Who can play</u>
<i>Optional:</i> Printed copy of animal pictures (attached)	Child and adult / older sibling

**Blending** involves hearing separate sounds and putting them together in your mind to form a complete word. This skill is one part of **phonological awareness**. It will be needed when children are “sounding out” words by saying each sound and then putting them together to make the word. For example, the sounds /t/ /o/ /p/ are blended together to make the word *top*.

## What you do

1. If you are using the animal pictures, cut them apart and put them right-side up on the table. If you’re not using printed pictures, you can draw some animals and use those, or have your child help you name as many animals as possible.
2. Explain that you will sing a verse of “Old MacDonald,” and you will say an animal name in a special way. Have your child figure out what animal name you are saying by blending the separate sounds together. For example, for *duck*, you will sing:

**Old MacDonald had a farm...**

**E-I-E-I-O!**

**And on that farm,**

**he had a /d/ /u/ /k/...**

**E-I-E-I-O!**

3. Think of one of the animals on the table or one that you named, but do not tell your child which animal it is. Sing the verse with that animal’s name separated into sounds. When your child knows the animal name you sounded out, they can hold up the card with that animal or tell you the name of the animal.
4. Here are the names of the animals in the pictures, separated into sounds:

c-a-t

*cat*

h-e-n

*hen*

d-u-ck

*duck*

d-o-g

*dog*

p-i-g

*pig*

l-a-m-b

*lamb*

h-or-se

*horse*

g-o-a-t

*goat*

w-al-r-u-s

*walrus*

c-ow

*cow*

s-k-u-nk

*skunk*

f-l-a-m-ing-o

*flamingo*



### Other ways to play

1. If your child is not really into singing, or *you* are not really into singing, you can simply say the sounds and have your child blend the sounds together and pick up the card that shows that animal.
2. Instead of saying each sound separately, stretch out the name of the animal and have your child blend the sounds together to come up with the name of the animal. For example, say *ssssssssssss...nnnnnnnnnnnn...aaaaaaaaaaaa...k* for *snake*.

### Taking it further

1. Try playing without using the pictures or naming the animals first. Your child will have to listen more closely in order to hear the sounds, blend them together, and come up with the name of the animal.
2. Instead of saying the sounds for the name of one of the animals, say the sounds for an animal whose name *rhymes* with one of the animals. Have your child blend the sounds together and then pick up or name the animal whose name rhymes with that word. For example, say the sounds for *log* (l-o-g), and your child will blend them together to make *log*, and then pick up *dog*, because it rhymes with *log*.





