Dyslexia Activities

Activities to support your child:

Phonological awareness

The phonological processing skill that has the most impact on the student's ability to understand the alphabetic principle is phonological awareness. Successful readers have well-developed phonological awareness. Deficits in phonological awareness result in difficulty learning phonics through traditional teaching strategies and require interventions using a multisensory teaching method to develop these skills.

Phonological awareness skills normally develop in the following order and should be taught in the following hierarchy:

- Blending
- Segmentation
- Rhyme and Alliteration
- Manipulation

Phonemic awareness

The most complex level of phonological awareness involves the smallest unit of speech and is referred to as phonemic awareness. This is the ability to recognize the number of sounds in a word, then isolate and name those sounds.

Development of this skill progresses in the following order:

Skill	Task	Activity
Sound blending	starting with two-phoneme words	go, at, it
Sound matching	initial, final sound in a word	car, cat, cub Mat, hot, rut
Sound isolation	initial, final, medial sound in a word	man /mmm/ cat /ttt/ log /ooo/
Sound segmentation	starting with two-phoneme words	am /aaa/ /mmm/
Sound manipulation	substitution, deletion, addition, reordering of sounds in words	Hot – pot Cat – at Tree – trees Pat - tap

Examples of tasks to build phonemic awareness:

Skill	Task	Activity
Phoneme isolation	Requires recognizing individual sounds in words	"Tell me the first sound in the word cat."
Phoneme identity	Requires recognizing the common sound in different words.	"Tell me the sound that is the same in map and pot."
Phoneme categorization	Requires recognizing the word with the odd sound in a sequence of three or four words	"Which word does not belong: bin, bun, rag?"
Phoneme segmentation	Requires breaking a word into its sounds by tapping out or counting the sounds or by pronouncing or positioning a marker for each sound	"How many sounds are in the word tree?"
Phoneme deletion	Requires recognizing the word that remains when a specified phoneme is removed	"What is smile without the /s/?"

Try these sound activities at home:

Rhyme time

"I am thinking of an animal that rhymes with *big.* What's the animal?" Answer: *pig*. What else rhymes with *big*? (*dig*, *fig*, *wig*)

Road trip rhymes

While you're out driving in the car, spot something out the window and ask your child, "what rhymes with *tree* or *car* or *shop*?" Then switch roles and have your child spot something and ask you for a rhyme. This can turn into a game of nonsense rhymes ("What rhymes with *tree stump*?") but that's great for practicing sounds, too!

Word families

Word families are sets of words that rhyme. Start to build your family by giving your child the first word, for example, *cat*. Then ask your child to name all the "kids" in the *cat* family, such as: *bat, fat*, *sat*, *rat*, *pat*, *mat*, *hat*, *flat*. This will help your child hear patterns in words.

Silly tongue twisters

Sing songs and say silly tongue twisters. These help your child become sensitive to the sounds in words.

Tongue ticklers

Alliteration or "tongue ticklers" — where the sound you're focusing on is repeated over and over again — can be a fun way to provide practice with a speech sound. Try these:

- For M: Miss Mouse makes marvelous meatballs!
- For S: Silly Sally sings songs about snakes and snails.
- For F: Freddy finds fireflies with a flashlight.

Syllable shopping

While at the grocery store, have your child tell you the syllables in different food names. Have them hold up a finger for each word part. *Eggplant* = egg-plant, two syllables. *Pineapple* = pine-ap-ple, three syllables. Show your child the sign for each and ask her to say the word.

"I spy" first sounds

Practice beginning sounds with this simple "I spy" game at home, on a walk, or at the grocery store. Choose words with distinctive, easy-to-hear beginning sounds. For example, if you're in the bathroom you can say, "I spy something red that starts with the "s" ssss sound (*soap*)."

Sound scavenger hunt

Choose a letter sound, then have your child find things around your house that start with the same sound. "Can you find something in our house that starts with the letter "p" pppppp sound? *Picture*, *pencil*, *pear*"

Sound games

Practice blending sounds into words. Ask "Can you guess what this word is? m - o - p." Hold each sound longer than normal.

First sounds

When you're reading together with your child, pick a word from the book and say it with emphasis on the first sound. Pick another word and compare them. "Zzz-zookeeper and rrr-rhinoceros. Can you hear what sound zzz-zookeeper starts with? Is it the same as rrr-rhinoceros?

Jump, skip, hop!

Create simple picture cards that you draw or cut out of magazines. Have your child, identify what's in the picture, and then break that word into its individual sounds. For example *dog* is d-o-g, three sounds (phonemes). Three sounds? You and your child do three jumping jacks, skips, or hops (followed by a high-five). You can also do this game outdoors without the cards, just call out simple words for your child.

Snail talk

Tell your child you're going to communicate in "snail talk" and they need to figure out what you're saying. Take a simple word and stretch it out very slowly (e.g., /fffffllllaaaag/), then ask your child to tell you the word. Switch roles and have your child stretch out a word for you.

"I spy" blending

Here's an easy phoneme blending game you can play while talking a walk. For blending, you can say, "I see a sign that says s-t-o-p" Then your child has to blend the sounds to guess your word — *stop*. (Remember to say only the sounds in the word — not the letters.) Keep the words short, moving from two to three to four sounds depending on your child's skill level.

Sound counting

Using LEGO bricks, beads, or pennies, say a word and have your child show you how many sounds the word makes. For example, *top* = t-o-p = three sounds, so your child would place three objects in a row. Then have them tap each object as they say the sound. Remember, your child is just showing you the sounds they hear. So the word *bike* would be = b-i-k (silent e) = only three sounds.

Talk about letters and sounds

Help your child learn the names of the letters and the sounds the letters make. Turn it into a game! "I'm thinking of a letter and it makes the sound mmmmmm."

Model finger-point reading

That means to follow the words with your finger from left to right as you read them. Your beginning reader will do the same thing for awhile.

Practice patience!

Beginning readers may read slowly. Give your child time to decode the words and avoid jumping in too quickly.

Encourage attention to letters and sounds

If your child is stuck on a word, prompt them to look at the first letter of the word and make the letter's sound. Of course, only do this for words that can be sounded out! If the word can't be sounded out, just supply the word for them.

Phonological Memory

Phonological memory is remembering a sequence of unfamiliar sounds, storing sound sequences within words in short-term memory and effectively recalling words from short-term memory, and reading and spelling long words.

Strong phonological memory skills are predictive of successful decoding skills, reading accuracy, and larger vocabularies.

Examples of tasks to build phonological memory

Skill	Task	Activity
Letter retrieval	Name letters in a series	m-r-f-l, t-o-e-r
Number retrieval	Name numbers in a series	4-3-6-5, 9-5-3-1-4
Nonsense word retrieval	Repeat nonsense words	flit, roan

Rapid Automatic Naming

Automaticity in naming is learned by first learning the name of something, and then having to name it under increasing levels of stress and distraction. Rapid automatic naming is the efficient retrieval from long term memory of phonological information, such as, individual sounds in words, pronunciations of common word parts, and pronunciations of whole words.

Strength in the rapid automatic naming skill is predictive of continued development of adequate reading fluency and rate.

Examples of tasks to build rapid automatic naming

Skill	Task	Activity
Color Naming	Name colors in a series	Red, blue, green, yellow
Letter Naming	Name letters in a series	L, b, r, s
Number Naming	Name numbers in a series	4-6-7-9
Word naming	Name words in a series	Cat, mop, way, any

Phonics

The primary focus of phonics instruction is to help beginning readers understand how letters are linked to sounds (phonemes) to form letter-sound correspondences and spelling patterns and to help them learn how to apply this knowledge in their reading.

Try these phonics activities at home:

Alphabet scavenger hunt

Be sure your kindergartner knows all of her uppercase and lowercase letters. One fun and easy way to practice is to pick up a favorite read aloud book and have your child find each letter in the print, in alphabetical order. Ask your child if some letters are harder to spot in every book, and guess why that might be.

Grocery store literacy

Choose a letter as you're walking into the store. Make a game of finding things in the store that start with that letter. For example, for the letter "p" you could find peanuts, popcorn, pineapple, paper and pizza. Emphasize the letter "p" and the sound it makes with each of your "p" words.

Trace and say

Have your child use a finger to trace a letter while saying the letter's sound. Your child can trace on paper, in sand, or on a plate of sugar. Next, see if your child can trace a simple two- or three-letter word (it, at, sat) and sound it out.

The "H Brothers"

Explain to your child that sometimes two letters will stand together to create one new sound. The “H Brothers” join with other letters to make the sounds: sh, ch, th, wh and ph. Write down some example words and use multisensory props and gestures to help your child remember the new letter combination.

Fridge fun

Magnetic letters can provide lots of easy phonics practice right in your kitchen. For an alphabet refresher, ask your child to arrange the letters in alphabetical order. Next, ask her to pick out a letter, think of a simple three- or four-letter word that starts with that letter, and spell it out on the refrigerator. Can your child think of more words to spell with that first letter? Finally, see if she can change one letter in the word to make a new word.

Scrambled words

Draw three boxes side by side on a piece of paper. Using magnetic letters or letters written on paper, scramble the letters of a simple three-letter word (big, bug, top, ran) under the boxes. Have your child unscramble the letters and place them into the correct box.

Extra, extra!

Ask your child to find and cut out all the words in a newspaper or magazine that she can read. Glue or tape them onto a piece of paper and practice reading them together.

Dig into decodable books

Through read alouds, kindergarteners should be exposed to a wide range of books that introduce them to rich vocabulary and story structure. But there is also a role for decodable books to help your child practice beginning phonics skills. Decodable books contain a high percentage of words with predictable letter-sound relationships.

Sight word spy

Tell your child that sight words are "hiding in plain sight" everywhere around us. Your child's "mission" is to spot the sight words out in the world (in the grocery store, on a sign, cereal box, or movie poster) and announce "aha, I found you! This silly game can get your child excited about recognizing words — as well as a boost of confidence from knowing how to read them.

Fluency

The ability to read with speed, accuracy, and proper expression and is a critical part of literacy instruction, as it is the bridge between foundational skills and comprehension. While reading rate is an important factor, systemic instruction of fluency involves more than just a student’s reading rate—it also includes prosody, accuracy, and comprehension of the text.

RANKIN COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
GREAT TO BEST

Try these fluency activities at home:

Choose the right books

Help your child choose books that he can comfortably read. The "five-finger test" is a useful guideline for beginning readers. As your child reads, count the number of words he cannot read per page. In general, there should be five words or fewer that give him trouble on each page. If a book contains several pages on which you count more than five words that he can't read, consider reading that book to your child until he develops more reading skill.

Listen every day

Once you've found a collection of books that your child can read, listen to your child read every day. Be patient — new readers often read slowly! Offer help when your child gets stuck, and always give lots of praise and encouragement.

Reread favorite books

Building fluency takes a lot of practice! Keep a collection of books that your child can read quickly and easily. Encourage your child to reread favorite books over and over again. With each reading, you may notice your child reading a bit easier, a bit faster, and with a bit more confidence and expression.

Read to your child every day

Model your own fluent reading as you read and reread books with your child. Even though your child may be able to read on her own, continue to find time each day to read books to her that are just beyond her reading level. She will enjoy listening to more advanced stories, and she will hear a great example of fluent reading — how you change your expression throughout a story and read with ease. Your child will hear how you raise your voice at the end of question sentence or how you change your voice for different characters.

Paired or "buddy" reading

Take turns reading aloud. You go first, as your reading provides a model of what good fluent reading sounds like. Then, ask your child to re-read the same page you just read. You'll notice that your child's reading will start to sound more and more like yours. Do this for several pages. Once your child is comfortable enough, and familiar enough with the book, take turns reading page for page.

Echo game

Choose a book at your child's reading level and read a sentence aloud using appropriate expression and pauses. Then, have your child mimic you, reading the same sentence and using the same expression and pauses. Repeat the game every few paragraphs as you read through the book.

Choral reading

Choose a book at your child's reading level and read a page or passage together in unison. You may have to slow your reading down a little to keep pace, but don’t slow down too much. Encourage your child to copy your pace and expression.

Vocabulary

Vocabulary is the knowledge of words and word meanings. Vocabulary knowledge is not something that can ever be fully mastered; it is something that expands and deepens over the course of a lifetime. Instruction in vocabulary involves far more than looking up words in a dictionary and using the words in a sentence. Vocabulary is acquired through exposure to words and through explicit instruction in specific words and word-learning strategies. Here are four components of effective vocabulary instruction:

1. independent reading to expand word knowledge
2. instruction in specific words to enhance comprehension of texts containing those words
3. instruction in independent word-learning strategies, and
4. word consciousness and word-play activities to motivate and enhance learning

Try these vocabulary activities at home:

Read aloud every day

Reading aloud to your child and having your child read books on their own is the best way to increase their vocabulary. Books provide words they won't encounter in everyday conversations as the language of books is more complete and formal than talking. A great story also provides context and illustrations for learning a new word.

Bring in the nonfiction

Nonfiction and informational books offer young children a treasure chest of new and interesting words about our world. If the book has a glossary, spend some time discussing the words with your child, and as you read aloud stop as often as needed to think about new words and how they connect to what your child already knows about.

Talk about new words during read alouds

Talking to and reading with your child are two terrific ways to help them hear and read new words. Conversations and questions about interesting words are easy ways to get new words into everyday talk. "The book says, 'The boy tumbled down the hill,' and look at the picture! How do you think he went down the hill?"

Sharing a new word with your child doesn't have to take a long time: just a few minutes to talk about the word and then focus back on the book or conversation. The best words to explore are ones that are less common to see in the books your child might read. When introducing new words to your young learner, keep the following four helpful hints in mind:

1. **Provide a simple, kid-friendly definition for the new word:** *Enormous* means that something is really, really big.
2. **Offer a simple, kid-friendly example that makes sense within their daily life:** Remember that really big watermelon we got at the grocery store? That was an *enormous* watermelon!
3. **Encourage your child to develop their own example:** What *enormous* thing can you think of? Can you think of something really big that you saw today? That's right! The bulldozer near the park was *enormous*! Those tires were huge.

4. **Keep your new words active within your house.** Over the next few days and weeks, take advantage of opportunities to use each new vocabulary word in conversation. Kids often need to hear a new word in context ten times or more before they "know" that word.

Comprehension

Effective comprehension instruction is instruction that helps students to become independent and strategic readers who are able to develop, control, and use a variety of comprehension strategies to ensure that they understand what they read.

Comprehension instruction must begin as soon as students begin to read, and it must be explicit, intensive, and persistent to help students become aware of the organization of text.

Try these comprehension activities at home:

Try to read at home together every day

Just 15 minutes each day makes a big difference! Reading aloud is a great way to help your child absorb new words and see how stories are structured. It's also one of the best ways to help children learn about the world and make connections between their own lives and what's in the book — that helps children see the world with empathy.

Explore your world together

Even a walk around the neighborhood or a trip to the grocery store can be a rich learning experience for young children. A child may see a bunny for the first time on a walk, and then be able to connect it to stories about rabbits. These personal connections help children connect what they read with what they know — a powerful way to build comprehension skills!

"I predict ..."

When you sit down for a read aloud, look at the book's cover together. Ask, "What do you think this book might be about? Why? Can you make some predictions?" Guide your child through the pages, discuss the pictures, and brainstorm what might happen in the story. Talk about any personal experiences your child may have that relate to the story.

Five-finger retell

After reading a story together, have your child tell you five things about the story, using his/her fingers to talk about each one:

1. Characters: who was in the story?
2. Setting: where did the story take place?
3. Events: what happened in the story?
4. End: how did the story end?
5. Favorite character or part of the story?

Active reading

Model active reading when you read with your child. Talk about what's happening as you're reading. Stop and discuss any interesting or tricky vocabulary words. Help your child make pictures of the story in his/her mind. Ask your child, "What just happened here? How do you think that character feels? Have

you ever felt like that? What do you think will happen next?" Not only will this develop your child's comprehension, but critical thinking skills as well.

Mind movies

When you come to a descriptive passage in a book, have your child close her eyes and create a mental movie of the scene. Encourage her to use all five senses. Read the passage over together, looking for details that bring the scene to life. Ask questions like, "How do you know it was a hot day? Which words help you understand that the child was lonely?"

Tell me about it

After a read aloud, one of the best and easiest ways to check for understanding is to ask your child to summarize what the book was about in their own words. You can ask a question or two to help your child clarify his/her thinking or to add more detail.

Think alouds

- **Connect the book to your child's own life experience.** For example, *A River Dream*: "This book reminds me of the time my father took me fishing. Do you remember the time we went fishing?"
- **Connect the book to other books they have read.** For example, *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*: "This story reminds me of Cinderella. Both stories are about sisters. Do you know any other stories about nice and mean sisters? Let's keep reading to find out other ways the stories are similar."
- **Connect the book to big ideas/lessons.** For example, *Stellaluna*: "This story helps me understand that we are all the same in many ways, but it's our differences that make us special."

Wordless

Wordless picture books provide your child with practice using clues to create meaning. There are no wrong stories with wordless picture books, only variations based on what the "reader" sees and puts together. *Rosie's Walk*, *Good Dog, Carl*, and *Beaver Is Lost* are all interesting and fun wordless picture books to explore.

Family stories

This is a wonderful activity for a family picnic or for a rainy day. Share a favorite story about your childhood or a family story that's been passed down from generation to generation. Use vivid language and details about people, places, and things. Funny or scary will really get your child's attention! Your child will probably have lots of questions, which keeps the storytelling alive. You could also ask your child if she has a favorite family story of her own.

Map this book!

Draw a map of the book's setting and be sure to include the places where the main action happens!

Beginning-middle-end

This is a great way to see if your child understands the main parts of a story. After reading a book together, give your child three sheets of paper, with "beginning" on one sheet, "middle" on the second

sheet, and "end" on the third sheet. Ask your child to think about the three parts of the story, and then draw what happened on each on the sheets. Arrange the sheets in order, left to right. What happens if you re-arrange the sheets? Does the story still make sense?

Words, words, words

Be sure to include books with rich vocabulary in your read alouds and call attention to interesting words and phrases from the story. This may include repeated phrases or idioms (such as "get cold feet" or "I'm all ears"). Offer a kid-friendly definition and connect the new word or phrase to something your child already knows. Talk about how the author used language or words to make the text interesting, informative, funny, or sad.

Picture walk

Talk about the book before you read it. Show the cover illustration and ask your child to predict what the book is about. Flip through the book, look closely at the pictures together, and talk about what's on the jacket flaps.

Remember when ...?

Connect what your child reads with what happens in life. If reading a book about birds, relate it to birds you've seen on walks in your neighborhood.

Story detectives

As you read with your child, stop and ask questions such as: What's happening in the picture? Why do you think the puppy is sad? Have you felt that way yourself? Why do you think the spider wanted to help the pig? What do you think is going to happen next? How do you think the story will end? Take turns and let your child to "be the detective" and ask you questions about the book. Not only will this develop your child's comprehension, but critical thinking skills as well.

Resources

The Rankin County School District (RCSD) Dyslexia Activities Packet utilized some of the activities from the Reading Rockets Website. For Additional information click on the link to access the Reading Rockets Home Page.

The Mississippi Department of Education has developed a Mississippi Dyslexia Support Guide to provide guidance for Mississippi school districts, teachers, and parents in the identification and instruction of students with dyslexia. This support guide provides current information concerning the terms dyslexia, accommodations, modifications, and instructional strategies to meet the unique needs of students with dyslexia.

The Rankin County School District utilizes dyslexia therapists and Certified Academic Language Therapists who are highly trained in providing dyslexia therapy to students that have been diagnosed with dyslexia. For additional information on the dyslexia therapy program in Rankin County please reach out to Laurie Weathersby at lau532@rcsd.ms.