

PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Take-Home Resource & Activity Pack

What is Phonemic Awareness?

Phonemes are the individual sounds that make up words. For example, the word key has two phonemes (/k/ /e/) and the word stop has four phonemes (/s/ /t/ /o/ /p/).

Phonemic awareness is the understanding that words are made up of individual phonemes (sounds). When a child has phonemic awareness, he/she can hear and manipulate the individual sounds in words.

Phonemic awareness is auditory and does not involve print. Phonics is the study of sound-symbol relationships (letters and their corresponding sounds). Phonemic awareness is a precursor to phonics, which does involve print.

Why is it Important?

Children need to be able to hear the sounds in words before they can begin to read or write them. When they are sounding out a word, they need to be able to blend those sounds together. They may know the letter-sound relationship and be able to sound out, "/c/ /a/ /t/". They must have phonemic awareness in order to blend those sounds together to read **cat**.

When spelling words, a child needs to be able to do the opposite—segment the sounds of a word. For some kids, these skills come more naturally. For many children, the ability to blend and segment words needs to be practiced and taught.

Academic Research Citation: Several studies (Anderson, Hiebert, Scott, & Wilkerson, 1985; Adams, 1990; Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998) show that phonemic awareness is a key indicator of reading success.

Key Examples of Phonemic Awareness Skills

- **Identifying Rhymes:** Recognizing words that sound alike at the end (e.g., cat / hat).
- **Grouping Words:** Sorting words by similar initial sounds. (e.g., Ball, bear, and bike all start with /b/).
- **Isolating Sounds:** Identifying the first, middle, and last sounds in words.
- **Blending Sounds:** Combining individual phonemes into words: /w/ /i/ /sh/ = wish.
- **Segmenting Words:** Breaking words into component phonemes: wish has 3 phonemes broken up as /w/ /i/ /sh/.
- **Manipulating Sounds:** Changing phonemes within words: Change the /w/ in wish to /d/ to make dish.

At-Home Practice Activities

1. Silly Rhymes (Simon Says with a Twist)

1. Replace a word with a rhyming word when giving a direction. Enunciate the rhyming word clearly.
2. After several games, start altering the lead name to practice sound substitution (e.g., Fimon Says or Timon Says).

Examples / Hints:

- "Simon says sit on the bouch." (instead of couch)
- "Fimon says touch your toes!"

2. Roll a Tongue Twister

1. Roll a standard number cube (1 to 6).
2. Match the number rolled to a target character/picture sound.
3. Together, come up with words that also start with that same sound.
4. Make up a funny story or sentence using that word and several other words starting with that sound.
5. BONUS: Count the words as you say the sentence. Give 'points' for how many words you include with that target sound!

Roll 1: Alligator (/a/) <i>"Alex the Alligator eats apples in his attic with his aunt Allison."</i>	Roll 2: Bear (/b/) <i>"Bobby the bear buys a baseball bat for his best brother Bert."</i>
Roll 3: Cheetah (/ch/) <i>"Charlie Cheetah chose to chase that child with chips."</i>	Roll 4: Alligator/Gator (/g/) <i>"Green gators grab grapes growing in giant gardens."</i>
Roll 5: Flamingo (/f/) <i>"Freddie Flamingo finds five fresh fish floating fast."</i>	Roll 6: Penguin (/p/) <i>"Penny Penguin passes the pumpkin to the person in purple."</i>

3. Hop to It (Kinesthetic Segmentation)

1. Draw three circles or squares on the ground using chalk (or use paper mats indoors).
2. Say a word and have your child jump into a circle for each individual sound as they break apart the word.
3. Reverse Game: Jump together into the circles while saying individual sounds, then have your child guess the combined word!

Examples / Hints:

- You say "pot" -> Child jumps in Circle 1 (/p/), Circle 2 (/o/), Circle 3 (/t/).
- You jump and say "/b/ /a/ /t/" -> Child guesses "bat!"

4. Bead Slide (Tactile Sound Counting)

1. Put two, three, or four beads onto a pipe cleaner.
2. Group the beads together at one end when saying the full word.
3. As you break apart the sounds in that word, slide one bead across for each sound.
4. Extend: Ask your child which bead represents a specific sound.

Examples / Hints:

- In the word "pack", ask: "Which bead makes the /k/ sound?" (The 3rd bead!)

5. What's the Sound? (Sound Isolation)

1. Say any simple word to your child.
2. Ask your child to isolate and identify the first, middle, or last sound (focus on sound, not the letter name).
3. Tip: You can do this activity anywhere—on a walk, in the car, cooking dinner, or reading a book together!

Examples / Hints:

- Question: "What is the last sound in jam?" -> Answer: "/mmm/"
- Look around you for items: leaf, spoon, cat, school, cup.

6. I Spy (Auditory Blending Game)

1. Choose words that only have 2 or 3 sounds (phonemes, not letters).
2. Say: "I spy a /c/ /u/ /p/." (Segment the word into clear, separate phonemes).
3. Your child blends the sounds together to guess the object!

I Spy Word Bank (Household & Outside Words)

cat	dog	knife	fork	bowl	rug	bed
light	couch	chair	leaf	gate	pen	cup
mug	bird	toy	car	road	path	jar
tub	tooth	mouth	ring	soap	bug	book
tree	bee	box	pan	pot	vase	phone
sheet	shade	sock	shoe	coat	purse	hat