

# Phonological Awareness

## What is it?

Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sound structure in words. When a child has phonological awareness, they can recognize and play with different sound parts in words. Phonological awareness begins with the understanding that our language is made up of words, then that those words have syllables and rhymes, and finally individual sounds.



The dog will nap.



Word Level:

Do these rhyme?



Syllable Level:

What is the 1<sup>st</sup> syllable in basket?



Sound Level:

What is the 1<sup>st</sup> sound in dog?

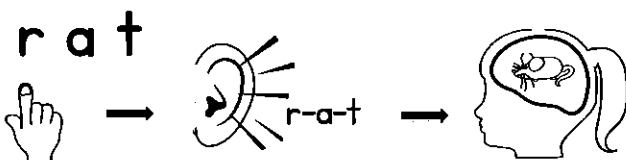
Sentence Level:

How many words?

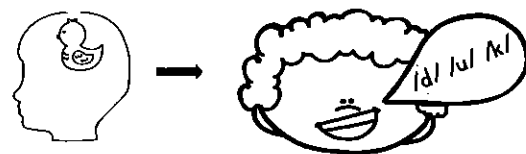
Phonological awareness is made up of a group of skills. The most advanced is **phonemic awareness**. **Phonemic awareness** is the understanding that words are made up of individual sounds. **Phonemes** are the individual sounds that make up words. For example, the word *shop* has three phonemes: sh-o-p. Phonemic awareness is auditory and does *not* involve print. **Phonics** is the study of the sound-symbol relationships (letters and their corresponding sounds). Phonemic awareness is a precursor to **phonics**.

## 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 relationships to enable them to say, "s-a-t," but they must have phonemic awareness in order to blend those sounds together to read *sat*. When spelling words, a child needs to be able to do the opposite- break apart 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.



In order to read, a child must be able to blend the sounds together to make a whole word.



To **segment** phonemes, a child must be able to hear a whole word, then break it apart into its individual sounds.

# Phonemic Awareness Activities

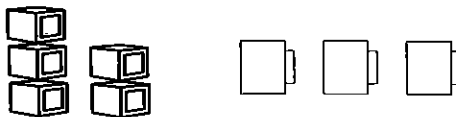
## Silly Rhymes

(Simon Says with a twist!)

1. Replace a word with a rhyming word when giving a direction. Enunciate the rhyming word. "Simon says sit on the bouch." (instead of *couch*)
2. After several games, start saying Fimon fays or Timon tays.



## Syllable Snap



Use LEGOS, snap cubes, or blocks to break apart and connect words with more than one syllable. Compare the sizes of each word. For example, say the word elephant, then "clap out" the syllables: el-e-phant. Have your child put together three blocks or cubes to show how many syllables. Reverse it by having blocks together already. Have your child take apart the blocks as they say each syllable.

## What's the Sound?

1. Say a word to your child.
2. Ask your child to tell you the first, middle, or last sound (not letter) in that word. Ex: What is the last sound in *jam*?
3. Variation: Say the sounds in the word while touching head, hips, and toes. /j/ (head), /a/ (hips), /m/ (toes). Ask, "Where is the /a/ sound?" (touch hips)



You can do this while you are on a walk, in the car, cooking, or while looking at a book. Choose words that you see around you (leaf, spoon, cat, school, etc).

## I Spy

1. Choose words that only have two or three sounds (not necessarily 2 or 3 letters, just 2 or 3 sounds.)
2. Say, "I spy a /c/ /u/ /p/." (You will take the word and break them apart to separate the sounds.)
3. Your child will try to figure out the word.



Household and 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

## Stuffy Sounds

1. Get silly with your child's favorite "stuffy" (stuffed animal).
  2. Tell your child that you need help understanding his language. Ask him or her to help you "translate". Have the animal whisper a word a to you. Then tell your child the word, the way the animal said it.
- "Mr. Bear said /c/ /a/ /t/. What is that word?"



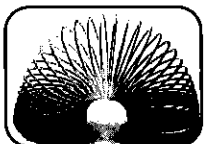
## Tongue Twisters



Make up silly sentences with several words that start with the same sound. Have your child identify the common sound. For example, "Freddy the frog found a fly on a fountain."

## Slinky Sounds

1. Say a word with only 2-4 sounds.
  2. Use a slinky to "stretch out" the words.
  3. Model first for your child, then have him/her try it.
- Cat= /c/ /aaaaa/ /t/ Pull the slinky as you stretch out each sound.



## Hop to It

1. Draw three circles or squares using chalk.
2. Say a word and have your child jump to each circle as they break apart the word.
  - Ex: You say, "pat" and your child jumps into the first circle and says, /p/. Then jumps into the 2<sup>nd</sup> circle and says, /a/, and then the final circle says, /t/.
3. You could also do the opposite: Jump together into the circles, saying sounds. Then try to guess the word.



## Words to use:

duck, bear, soap, soup, bat, leaf, shed, bell, moon, pin, rope, chip, ball, boat, pan, log, leg, cone, fan, seed, pan, bone, man, book, cat, rake, road, lip, mat, meat, lake, phone, pig, rag, slip, seat, chair, cup, rock, boat, feet, rain, cub, sock, coat, mouse, tape, goal, pail, tag, pen, pot, pit, watch, math, fish, chair, goat, shell, thumb