

At-Home Activities

Phonological Awareness

This is the ability to hear differences in the way words sound. Children with phonological awareness can do things like identify initial sounds in words, count syllables in words, and identify words that rhyme. **There is no print involved in phonological awareness, it's all about hearing the sounds.**

NOTE: It is a good idea to take the time and listen to a recording of the sounds letters make so that you are saying the sounds correctly without a schwa (UH) sound at the end.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBuA589kfMg>

- Play the “Listening Game” with your child. Sit quietly together and listen for sounds around the house. It might be the air conditioning coming on, or the dog outside barking. Ask them “what sounds can you hear with your ears?” Then talk about the sounds.
- **Rhyming** (similar word endings) Read books and say words that rhyme so your child becomes accustomed to hearing and repeating rhyme. Then move to having your child recognize and identify two words that rhyme. After your child can do these two things, encourage your child to think of words that rhyme with each other.
 - Read nursery rhymes or Dr. Seuss books. When you hear two words that rhyme, point them out, ask what other words might rhyme. Ask, what rhymes with cat? Do cow and how rhyme?
 - A list of rhyming books you might check out in your library is found at this website. <https://blog.allaboutlearningpress.com/rhyming-picture-books/>
 - Sing rhyming songs. “By the sea, by the sea, by the beautiful sea, you and me, you and me, oh, how happy we’ll be.” “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”
 - How many words can you find that rhyme with _____?
 - Choose two words that do not rhyme. “cup, cat” Do these words rhyme? If your child cannot tell, say cup ends in “UP” and cat ends in “AT” Can you hear the difference? Repeat.
- **Alliteration** (similar word beginnings)
 - Say tongue twisters (Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers). Ask what sound they hear at the beginning of most words.
 - “Animal Alliteration”- Cut out pictures of animals, Ask your child to name the animal and describe it using a word that begins with the same letter. (Frog - Fat Frog).
 - “Animal Alliteration”- Cut out pictures of animals, ask your child to name the animal and describe it using a word that begins with the same letter. (Frog - Fat Frog). Eventually move on to sentences. (The **fat frog** felt **funny** after eating the **fruit**.) All

the words do not need to begin with the letter. Have fun with this. It doesn't need to make sense, as long as the words have the same beginning sound.

- **Syllable, Word, and Sentence Segmentation** (taking everything apart)
 - “Clap, Tap, Jump, or Stomp the Syllables.” Start with two syllable words, (ta-ble, ketch-up) If their name is two syllables, start with that (Su-san) An-na).
 - Have the child practice clapping/segmenting words.
 - Have the child count the number of syllables after clapping it out.
 - “Syllable Move.” The child stands across the room from you. Say a word, the child claps the syllables, if correct, the child moves that many spaces forward you, continue until the child reaches you and wins the game.

Onsets and Rimes Recognition (beginning and endings of words.) In the word dog the /d/ sound is the onset and the /og/ is the rime.

Start with the rime /at/, with your child, put different letter sounds in front of it and decide if it makes a word, /b/ /at/ “bat,” is that a real word? What about /l/ /at/ “lat?” Is that a real word?

- **Phonemic Awareness-** the ability to hear and manipulate individual sounds in words
 - Hint:** * Think about the sound, not the spelling as you work with your child.
 - Identify words with the same beginning sound (Do cat and cow start with the same sound? What else starts with the same sound as book?)
 - Identify words with the same endings sound (Do fish and dish have the same ending sound? Do fish and cat?) Hat ends with the “t” sound. Listen, haT.” Use words that are meaningful to the child like her name or favorite toys.
 - How many words end in ___? Come up with a list of words that all end with the same sound: “bat, cot, boat,” etc. Try and beat your record. (Reminder: This is NOT a writing activity).
 - “See It and Say It”- (To help your child isolate the beginning sound in a word) “I see a ball in your room, what other thing do you see that has the same beginning sound?” “I see a book.” Yes, ball and book have the same beginning sound /b/. Later move to sounds at the end of the word, and eventually move to the middle vowel sounds (those are the hardest to hear).
 - “Head, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes” game for segmenting (separating) words. Use a word with up to four phonemes (single sounds). The child stands and touches head, shoulder, knees, and toes, saying each sound in the word (Jump - /j/u/m/p/).
 - “Snail Talk” – cut out pictures of objects your child will recognize. Tell them you are going to talk like a snail (very slowly). They look at the pictures and figure out which word you are saying. See the plane? PPP LLLLAANN (plane- remember the “e”

is silent). Your child repeats the word stretched out, then says the word in a regular way. Eventually, remove the pictures.

Phonics

This is the ability to match a unit of sound (phoneme) to the letter or letters that make the sound (grapheme).

Talk about what sounds are made by which letters.

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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wBuA589kfMg>

- Point out letters and print in books. Say what those letters are called and tell your child what sounds they make.
- Match the Letter to the Sound - Ask your child to tell you what letter makes a certain sound (What letter makes the /b/ sound?) Write the letter.
- Make an alphabet book using old magazines and catalogs. Have your child write the letter at the top. Help your child label the picture and read the words.
- Match the letters in your name to the sounds in your name.
- “Alphabet Ball” – Call out a letter and your child responds with a word that begins with that letter. Bounce the ball to your child and he calls out a letter and you respond.
- “Race Track” – Make a racetrack using paper and markers. Each block of the racetrack will have a separate letter. As your child races his car around the track, he must say the sound that matches the letter to move forward. You could begin with the letters in alphabetical order and later mix them up. (Remember, consonants are easier than vowel sounds).
- Write letters on pieces of paper and put them in a paper bag. Let your child reach in and take out letters. Have your child say the sounds that match the letters.
- Writing words - Many children love to send and receive notes, and writing is a great way to reinforce phonics skills. Send your child notes in his/her backpack or place notes on the pillow. Have a relative or friend send a letter or email to your child.
- Whenever your child receives a note, have him/her write back. Don't be concerned about spelling. Instead, have your child sound out the words to the best of his/her ability.
- Labeling words - When reading with your child, keep Post-it notes handy and have your child choose one picture in the book and label the picture on a Post- it (for example, a picture of a ball – write the word “ball”). Put the note in the book to read each time you come to that page.
- Practicing words with pictures - Choose pictures from a magazine or catalog. Say the name of the picture, have your child say the sound that the picture begins with and the name of that

letter.

- Hunting for words - Choose a letter and have your child hunt for five items beginning with that letter sound. As each object is found, help your child write the word on a list. For example, if the target sound is "m", the child might find and write mop, mat, Mom, map, and me.

Fluency

This is the ability to read aloud with speed, accuracy, and proper expression.

- “Echo Read”- Read a sentence and have your child read the same sentence after you. This gives them practice hearing how a sentence should be read with the right emphasis on words, stopping at the right place, and using the right intonation (the way your voice rises and falls when you speak).
- Choose the right books. The “five-finger test” is a useful guideline for knowing if a book is right for your child to read. 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 you count more, consider reading the book to your child until he develops more reading skill.
- Repeated readings – Encourage your child to reread favorite books. Repeated reading improves children’s fluency and comprehension. Talk about the book and practice reading with expression. Give the wolf a scary growl or use a squeaky voice for a mouse.
<https://www.readingrockets.org/article/summer-reading-and-fluency-tips-parents-reading-rockets>
- Audio-assisted reading- Have your child
 - listen to the story while following along with a paper copy of it.
 - read out loud along with the audio recording
 - read the passage without the recording
- Read and reread until they are reading with expression and proper pauses.
- You can tape your child’s favorite stories and have them listen to you reading. There are also websites that provide free audio books.
- **Storynory** gives parents links to songs, poems, nursery rhymes, myths, and other stories to listen to online or to download. <https://www.storynory.com/>
- **Children’s Books Online** contains audio books that can be downloaded.
<https://www.childrensbooksonline.org/library.htm>
- Check your local library. They often have audiobooks that can be checked out.
https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/audio_assisted_reading

- Short Fluency Phrases – repeated readings of a few phrases helps your child develop fluency and proficiency. You can make it a game. See how many ways you can say the phrase “Oh, no”. Below is a link to phrases and short sentences for repeated reading practice.
<https://www.readingresource.net/support-files/shortfluencyphrases.pdf>
- Recite nursery rhymes and poems to build familiar phrases in speech.
- In a repetitive text, ask your child to repeat the familiar phrase with you. Ex: For the story, “The House that Jack Built” your child can recite with you “ in the house that Jack built.”

Vocabulary

Children with a large vocabulary understand more of what they read and hear. Reading is the best way for your child to develop vocabulary.

- Read all sorts of books, signs on the walls, directions, recipes...a wide variety of reading material will expose them to a wide variety of new words.
- Read aloud - Continue to read aloud to your child even after he is able to read independently. Choose books above your child's level because they are likely to contain broader vocabulary. This way, you are actually teaching him new words and how they are used in context.
- Preview words - Before reading to or with your child, scan through the book, choose two words that you think might be interesting or unfamiliar to your child. Tell your child what the words are and what they mean. As you read the book, have your child listen for those words.
- Hot potato (version 1) - Play hot potato with synonyms. Choose a word, and then your child has to think of another word that means the same thing. Take turns until neither player can think of another word. For example, you may say, "Cold," and your child might say, "Freezing." Then you could say, "Chilly," and so on. Try the game again with antonyms (opposites).
- Hot potato (version 2) - Play hot potato with prefixes or suffixes. The prefixes dis-, ex-, mis-, non-, pre-, re-, and un- are common. Common suffixes include -able/- ible,-ed, -er, -est, -ful, -ish, -less, -ly, -ment, and -ness.
- Hot potato (version 3) - Play hot potato with categories. For younger children, the categories can be simple: pets, clothes, family members. For older children, the categories can be quite complex: The Revolutionary War, astronomy, math terms.
- Word Collecting - Have each family member look for interesting words that they heard that day. At dinner or bedtime, have everyone share the word they collected and tell what they think it means. If the child shares an incorrect meaning, guide him/her to the correct meaning. Try to use some of the words in conversation.
- Discuss positional words such as beside, below, under, over, etc. Make it into a game at dinner by asking your child to place his/her fork in different places in relation to his/her plate. Ex:

Put your fork above your plate.

- Use the language of books such as author, title, illustrator, title page, etc.
- Discuss ordinal words such as first, last, beginning, middle, etc.
- Play Hangman. This simple game will help build vocabulary and can be played anywhere because it only requires a pencil and paper.

Comprehension

The ability to make meaning from what is read.

- Read books together and discuss. Read to your children every evening. At the end of
- Each chapter, discuss what happened. Parents can still share books with older children by reading the same book separately. Ask your child every day, "Where are you in the book? What do you think about what happened next?" Allowing children to retell a story that they read lets them practice comprehension skills.
- Cook or bake with a recipe. Find a lengthy recipe for something that your children love to eat and make it together. Turn over recipe reading duties to your children and watch them take what they've read and turn it into something delicious.
- Who are the people you meet in a book? Talk to your child about the characters in the book. Ask questions...Do you like this person? Why or why not? What does this person look like? Where in the story does it tell you that?
- Illustrate your favorite book. Have your child draw pictures based on the story and put them in correct order.
- Sequencing errands - Talk about errands that you will run today. Use sequencing words (sequence, first, next, last, finally, beginning, middle, end) when describing your trip. For example, you might say, "We are going to make three stops. First, we will go to the gas station. Next, we will go to the bank. Finally, we will go to the grocery store."
- Sequencing comics - Choose a comic strip from the Sunday paper. Cut out each square and mix the squares up. Have your child put them in order and describe
- What is happening? Encourage your child to use words like first, second, next, finally, etc.
- Help your child make connections to his/her life experience while reading. You could say, "Is there anything you read in the story that reminds you of something? The boy who went to the zoo with his family reminds me of when we went to the zoo over the summer. What do you think?"
- As you are reading, think out loud to your child. Ask questions such as "I wonder why the boy is crying in the picture? Will he find his lost toy?" This demonstrates that reading and comprehension is an active process, not passive.

RESOURCES USED:

<https://www.education.com>

<https://www.themeasuredmom.com/>

https://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/blending_games

<https://www.phonics.com/>

The Mississippi Literacy-Based Promotion Act Implementation Guide

<https://districtaccess.mde.k12.ms.us/curriculumandInstruction/Literacy/LBPA-Implementation-Guide-2014.08.18.pdf>