

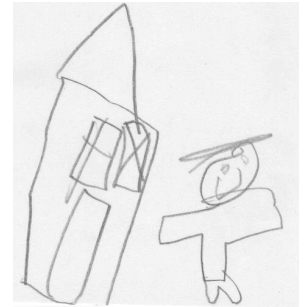


Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is the awareness of the sounds in language. The best way to develop phonological awareness is by playing with language, this is strictly an auditory skill. Children must learn to break sentences into words, and individual words into sounds before they can match letters and sounds to develop writing skills. It is all about hearing individual sounds. Phonological awareness is a crucial aspect of emergent literacy that can be supported by playing language games to develop specific skills.

1. Good listening skills

- Sing fun songs
- Read books and tell stories with repeated sounds
- Play listening games like "telephone"
- Play follow direction games like Simon Says
- Take listening walks



2. Word awareness – understand that sentences are made up of individual words

- Sing songs that include the child's name
- Add action for each word of a sentence – clap, jump, etc.
- Insert silly words or words that don't belong in directions or stories
- Read and tell stories that invite children to listen for specific sound

3. Syllable awareness

- Talk like a robot
- Clap syllables in words, use names or jump rope chants

4. Rhyming

- Sing songs
- Make up silly rhymes



There are 2 higher level phonological awareness strategies that children must understand before they can learn to read. The first is blending – the ability to take sounds and combine them in your head to make a word. Example: adult says the sounds C – A – T, the child pushes the sounds together and says 'CAT'. For this skill they do not name the letters, they are just working on blending sounds.

The other higher level strategy is segmenting – orally breaking a word into parts. For this skill the adult says 'PIG' and the child segments P – I – G, again naming sounds not letter names.

There are many games to reinforce these skills – sing a familiar song but change all the words to begin with one sound –

Binkle, Binkle Bittle Bar for Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.

Another idea is to play Secret Word: tell the child a category – such as food, then stretch out a word and the child blends it and says the word. You say T-O-S-T (sounds), child says 'toast'.

Remember these are strictly oral activities, when you begin to match letter names you are adding another skill.

Playful Literacy and You, Dr. Kara Gregory, Ingham Regional Literacy Training Center, 2002