

# Starting Off Right with Phonemic Awareness

*Fun Activities to Help  
Prepare Your Child  
for Reading*

TREASURE **BAY**  
WORKSHOPS

Parents can be key partners in helping their children become successful readers. All of the activities in this workshop can be used at home with your child. Doing even some of these activities will help to better prepare your child for reading.

- Definition
- Preparing your child for reading: the seven skills of phonemic awareness
- Fun activities you can do with your child to improve each skill

# What Is Phonemic Awareness?

The ability to hear, identify, and manipulate the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words

cat > /c/ /a/ /t/

The knowledge that spoken words can be broken into smaller segments of sounds (chunking)

firefighting > fire fight ing

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN PHONEMIC AWARENESS AND PHONICS IS THAT PHONEMIC AWARENESS IS PRIMARILY ABOUT THE INDIVIDUAL SOUNDS THE CHILD CAN HEAR.

# How Is It Taught?



- At home:

- Parents reading to their children
- Exposure to rhymes (songs, poems)
- Phonemic games



- At school:

- Teaching phonemic awareness
- Focusing on skill development in seven areas

# The Seven Skill Areas

1. Discriminating

5. Blending

2. Counting

6. Segmenting

3. Rhyming

7. Manipulating

4. Alliteration

# Discriminating

Skill: The ability to determine if two words begin or end with the same sound

Examples of activities:

- **Isolate That Sound** (What's the **first** sound in cat? What's the **first** sound in ball?; What's the **last** sound in bell? What's the **last** sound in tape?)
- **I Spy!** (I spy something in this room that **begins** with /w/ like water - window; I spy something that **ends** with /k/ like black – clock)
- **I Am Thinking** (I am thinking of something that **begins** with /t/ and it's something you might have to brush in the morning; I am thinking of something that **ends** with /g/ and it barks)



# Counting

Skill: The ability to hear and clap the number of words in a sentence, or syllables and sounds in a word

Activities:

- **Words** (I see the blue ball. – clap 5 times)
- **Syllables** (O/kla/ho/ma - clap 4 times)
- **Sounds** (/b/oo/k - clap 3 times)

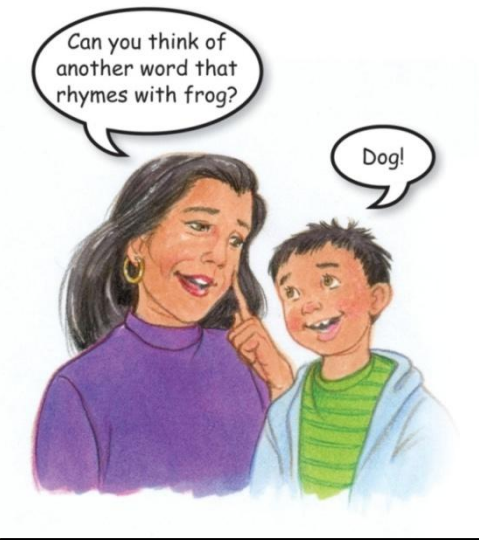


# Rhyming

Skill: The ability to create word families with rhyming words.

Activities:

- **Thumbs Up** Put your thumb up if these 2 words rhyme: call and ball – thumb up; ball and soccer – thumb down
- **Rhyming Picture Sort** Gather pictures of objects: plane, bat, girl, rat, cane, curl – child sorts – plane w/cane, bat w/rat, girl w/curl
- **Rhyming Oops! Wrong Rhyme** Hold up your hand and say, “This is my sand. Oops! That’s not right! Your child will say the rhyming word, hand. “Sand and hand rhyme.”.
- **Rhyming Stand Up!** Create rhyming prompts to complete actions. First, ask the children to say a particular word. Then, provide an action prompt for a word that rhymes with that word (without saying the rhyming word). Children perform the action and say the rhyming word. For example, you say “Say pup”. Children say the word pup. Then you say “Now stand \_\_\_\_.” Children stand up and say the word up. Another example: “Say band . Now raise your \_\_\_\_.(hand).” Or, “Say south. Now point to your \_\_\_\_ ” (mouth). Or, “Say low . Now find your \_\_\_\_ (toe).” Continue with similar prompts for actions or other parts of the body.
- **I Spy!** Say, “I spy something that rhymes with frog”.





# Alliteration

**Skill:** The ability to create a list of two or more words that have the same initial sound.

**Methods:**

- **Choosing two words, same sound**

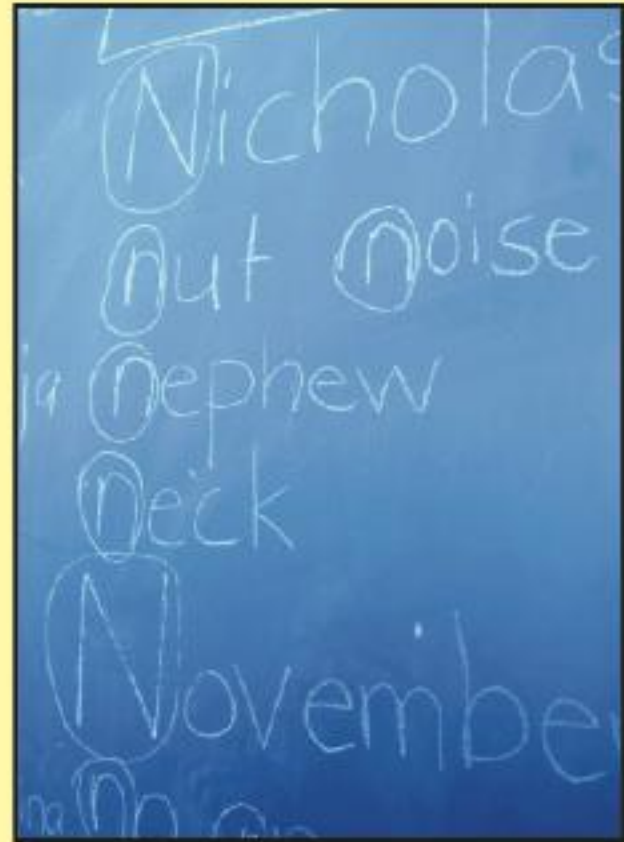
Name two words that start with the same sound. Ask child to continue naming words that start with the same sound. (continue using different sounds)

- **Creating tongue twisters**

Provide silly sentence-starter prompts that emphasize a beginning sound. Ex: "Sally's silly shoe sank slowly in the \_\_\_\_\_. (sand, snow, slime).

- **Creating silly sentences**

Write about 8 words that begin with same sound. Have your child arrange them into sentences. Rearrange them and read a new sentence.



# Blending

Skill: The ability to blend adjacent sounds together.

## Activities:

- **I Spy!** - Say: I spy something that has the sounds /r//u//g/. What is it?
- **I Am Thinking** - Say: I am thinking of something that has the sounds /m//a//p/. What is it?
- **Creating sentences** - Say a sentence, but for one of the words, just say the sounds. Ex: I saw a /j//e//t/. I saw a \_\_\_\_\_. (jet)



Practice can be  
anywhere and anytime!

# Segmenting

**Skill:** The ability to verbally isolate the individual sounds in a word.

**Activities:**

- **First I Heard** – Choose 3-sound word. Example: fin. Say: “First I heard /f/, then I heard /i/, and then I heard /n/. If necessary stick up 3 fingers and point to the 1<sup>st</sup> finger when you say the 1<sup>st</sup> sound, the 2<sup>nd</sup> finger when you say the 2<sup>nd</sup> sound, and the 3<sup>rd</sup> finger when you say the 3<sup>rd</sup> sound. Have your child do this using other 3-sound words like: lip, men, nap, rod, sun.
- **Head, Waist, and Knees** – This activity is similar to First I Heard, but instead of using 3 fingers, point to your head as you say the 1<sup>st</sup> sound, your waist as you say the 2<sup>nd</sup> sound, and your knees as you say the 3<sup>rd</sup> sound. Continue having your child do this with other 3-sound words.

# Manipulating

**Skill:** The ability to change words by deleting, adding, and substituting sounds and syllables.

**Activities:**

- **Deleting sounds:** Say the word, cat. Now, say the word without the first sound: /at/. Say the word, map. Say the word without the first sound: /ap/.
- **Adding sounds:** Say the word, cat. Now, add the /s/ sound to the end of the word: /cats/. Then, try this, (it may be more difficult). Add the /s/ sound to the beginning of the word: /scat/.
- **Substituting sounds:** Now say the word, mat. Change the /m/ sound to a /b/. What is the new word? /bat/

# Other Recommendations

- Focus on one specific skill at a time.
- Spend twenty minutes a day.
- Repetition and practice is key.