



Launching young readers!

Reading Rockets

Phonological and Phonemic Awareness



Before children learn to read print, they need to become aware of how the sounds in words work. They must understand that words are made up of individual speech sounds, or phonemes. A child's skill in phonological and phonemic awareness is a good predictor of later reading success or difficulty.

More resources:

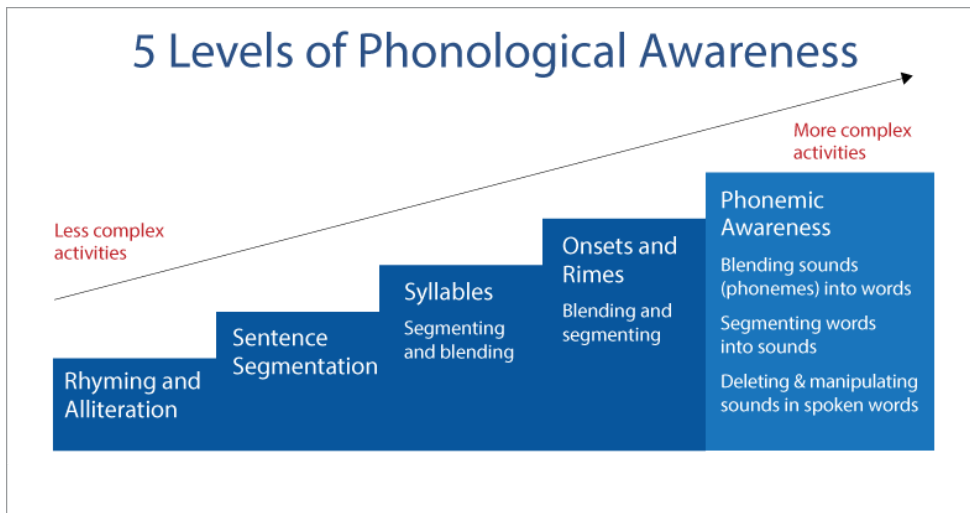
Phonological awareness is a critical early literacy skill that helps kids recognize and work with the sounds of spoken language.

Phonological awareness is made up of a group of skills. Examples include being able to identify words that rhyme, counting the number of syllables in a name, recognizing alliteration, segmenting a sentence into words, and identifying the syllables in a word. The most sophisticated — and last to develop — is called phonemic awareness.

Phonemic awareness is the ability to notice, think about, and work with the individual sounds (phonemes) in spoken words. Manipulating the sounds in words includes blending, stretching, or otherwise changing words. Children can demonstrate phonemic awareness in several ways, including:

- recognizing which words in a set of words begin with the same sound
("Bell, bike, and boy all have /b/ at the beginning.")
- isolating and saying the first or last sound in a word
("The beginning sound of dog is /d/. "The ending sound of sit is /t/.")
- combining, or blending the separate sounds in a word to say the word
("/m/, /a/, /p/ – map.")
- breaking, or segmenting a word into its separate sounds
("up – /u/, /p/.")

This diagram explains the relationship between phonological awareness and phonemic awareness:



Sometimes phonemic awareness is confused with phonics; they are two different yet interrelated skills.

Phonemic awareness refers to spoken language — the understanding that the sounds of spoken language work together to make words.

Phonics refers to the alphabetic principle — the idea that letters represent the sounds of spoken language.

Children who cannot hear and work with the phonemes of spoken words will have a difficult time learning how to relate these phonemes to letters when they see them in written words.

To learn more about phonemic awareness, browse the articles, parent tips, research

briefs, and video below.

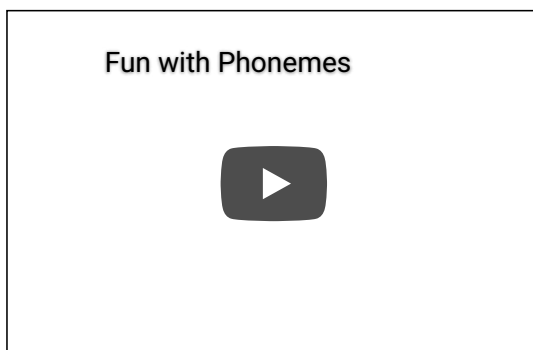
For Teachers

Classroom Strategies

For Parents

Research Briefs

Featured Video: Phonological and Phonemic Awareness



"I feel the need of reading. It is a loss to a man not to have grown up among books." —

Abraham Lincoln

