



Phonological Awareness

What is phonological awareness?

Phonological awareness is the child's ability to hear the different sounds that make up spoken words.

Why is phonological awareness important?

The awareness of sounds in words is a strong predictor of reading and spelling abilities in grade school.

What are some phonological awareness activities that I can do with my child?

1. Practice identifying the syllables in simple words.

- Start by giving your child a word that has two real word syllables such as 'cowgirl.' Say the word aloud, pausing after each syllable. Your child then says the word broken down into the two parts, 'cow---girl.'

Additional words with two real word syllables include cupcake (cup—cake), campsite (camp—site), raindrop (rain—drop).

- Next, give your child a word that has two 'silly' syllables or non-real words such as 'monkey.' Say the word out loud pausing after each syllable, 'mon—key.' Your child then says the word broken down into the two parts, 'mon---key.' Additional words with two 'silly' syllables include paper (pay—per), number (num---ber), table (ta---ble).
- Lastly, have your child try words that have three or more syllables. Words with three or more syllables include butterfly (buh—ter—fly), newspaper (news—pay—per), crocodile (cro—co—dile), telephone (tel—e—phone), vegetable (veg—tu—ble).

2. Practice identifying words that rhyme.

- Start by giving your child two words that do not rhyme, such as 'lake' and 'spoon.' Ask your child if the two words rhyme. The child should say "no." Then give your child two words that do rhyme such as 'flap' and 'tap.'
- Next, have your child choose the word that does not rhyme from a group of three words. For example, you could say 'bike', 'hike' and 'tree.' The child should pick 'tree' as the word that does not rhyme.
- Lastly, have your child choose the two words that rhyme from a group of four words. For example, you could say 'night, fly, light, and cup.' The child should say that 'night' and 'light' rhyme.





3. Practice making up rhyming words.

- Have your child make up silly words or say real words that rhyme. Silly words might be 'lat' and 'gat.' Real words might be 'tree' and 'tea.'

4. Practice sorting words. Practice with words that have the same **first** sound and the same **last** sound.

- First, give your child two words that have the same first sound. For example, "Do **f**ish and **p**hone start with the same sound?" The child should say 'yes.'
- Next, try words that have the same last sound. For example, "Do **cup** and **tap** have the same last sound?" The child should say, "yes."
- Then name two or three words with the same first sound and one word that does not have the same first sound. The child names the word that does not belong. For example, if you say the words '**f**ish', '**p**hone', '**b**at', and '**f**an' your child should choose 'bat' as the word that does not have the same first sound.
- Name two or three words with the same last sound and one word that does not have the same last sound. You could say, '**push**', '**hat**', '**splash**', and '**Josh**.' The child should choose 'hat' as the word that does not have the same last sound.
- Next, have your child pick out the word that has the same first or last sound as a word that you give. For example, ask your child to pick out the word that begins with the same sound as '**d**oll' from the words '**k**ey', '**b**ee', and '**d**og.' The child should answer "**d**og."
- The child sorts pictures into piles with matching first or last sounds. Show your child pictures without words. Have your child sort beginning or last sounds into different piles.

If you are worried that your child has a reading problem:

Call the Reading & Literacy Discovery Center at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center (513) 803-READ (513-803-7323) or visit us at <http://rldc.cchmc.org/>