

PARENT UNIVERSITY PRESENTS

# What families need to know about ...



## PHONEMIC AWARENESS

Phonemic awareness is the ability to **hear** individual sounds in spoken words and to **identify** and **use** these sounds. Before children learn to read, they need to become aware of letter sounds and how they work to form words. Phonemic awareness is the understanding that letter sounds work together to make words. Children who have strong phonemic awareness skills are likely to have an easier time learning to read and spell.

Below are phonemic awareness skills that children are learning in school:

- Discriminate (tell the difference between) sounds and words.
  - Tell whether the sounds are the same or different.
  - Recognize that letters represent sounds.
  - Identify the beginning, middle, and ending sounds in a one-syllable word.
  - Group the word according to the beginning, middle, and ending sounds.
- Discriminate and produce rhyming words (words having the same ending sound).
  - Repeat and produce rhyming words:  
Examples: funny – bunny; man – pan; house – mouse
  - Discriminate rhyming words from non-rhyming words.  
Examples: rainy – brainy (rhyming) vs. rainy – baby (non-rhyming)
- Discriminate and produce alliteration (words having the same beginning sound).
  - Identify and repeat phrases and sentences that use alliteration.  
Example: Baby Bob bumps his bouncing ball.
- Blend sounds and syllables to form words.
  - Blend syllables into a whole word.

Example: fun-ny = funny

- Blend two, three, and four letters into one-syllable words.  
Example: f-a-s-t = fast.

- Separate and use sounds in spoken words and sentences.
  - Identify the beginning sound in a word.
  - Substitute different beginning sounds to form new words:  
Example: cat – bat – hat – sat – rat
  - Delete, add, and substitute sounds to form new words:  
Example: table – able – stable – cable

### **How You Can Help Your Child at Home**

- Practice the sounds of language. Read rhymes, poems, and songs to your child, pointing out the words that rhyme.
- Read poems and nursery rhymes, and leave out a rhyming word. Have your child guess the missing word and explain their answer.
- Play simple word games, such as...
  - How many words can you think of that rhyme with the word *bat*?
  - Have a letter scavenger hunt around the house. Ask your child, “How many items can you find around the house that begin with the same sound as *dog*?”
  - Take a letter walk. Decide before your walk what letter you are going to concentrate on while you are walking, and look for all the things beginning with that letter.  
Example: As you begin your walk, say to your child, “Today we are going to see how many things we can see that begin with the letter *T*. What sound does the letter *T* make?” As you walk, your child will name all the things that begin with the letter *T* – trees, turtles, trucks, etc.
- Help your child separate the sounds in words, listen for beginning and ending sounds, and blend separate sounds together.
- Practice the alphabet with your child, and have the child tell you the sound that letter makes.
- Point out the letter-sound relationships your child is learning on boxes, newspapers, magazines, signs, and labels.